

# 41



## Custer Finishes 31<sup>st</sup> at Talladega *Accident Ends Race Early for Rookie Driver*

**Date:** Oct. 4, 2020  
**Event:** YellaWood 500 (Round 31 of 36)  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway (2.66-mile oval)  
**Format:** 188 laps, broken into three stages (60 laps/60 laps/68 laps)  
**Note:** Race extended 12 laps past its scheduled 188-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.  
**Start/Finish:** 18<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> (Accident, completed 108 of 200 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 16<sup>th</sup> with 2,095 points

**Race Winner:** Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** Chris Buescher of Roush-Fenway Racing (Ford)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Martin Truex, Jr. of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-60):

- Cole Custer started 18<sup>th</sup> and finished 10<sup>th</sup> to earn one bonus point.
- Throughout the three cautions before the scheduled competition caution, Custer reported his Mustang's front end was hitting the ground and remained in the top-20.
- Custer reached the top-five before the lap-25 competition caution. During the caution he pitted from eighth for fuel, two right-side tires and adjustments. He restarted ninth.
- After the restart, the rookie driver dropped back in the field before moving to fourth by lap 52.
- The caution was displayed towards the end of Stage 1 ultimately bringing it to a close and Custer finished 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 61-120):

- Custer started sixth and finished 31<sup>st</sup>.
- "A tick snug," Custer reported to the HaasTooling.com crew from seventh on lap 68.
- On lap 78, the California native was back up to the fourth spot.
- Just before the caution on lap 88, the Ford driver reported his Mustang was tight. Custer pitted and restarted 19<sup>th</sup> after several cars didn't pit.
- On lap 100, Custer was in the 20<sup>th</sup> spot and worked his way up through the field from there.
- Custer was in the top-five on lap 108 when a multi-car accident occurred and collected Custer to end his day in the 31<sup>st</sup> spot.

### Notes:

- Denny Hamlin won the YellaWood 500 to score his 44<sup>th</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his seventh of the season and his second at Talladega. His margin of victory over second-place Erik Jones was .086 of a second.
- There were 13 caution periods for a total of 54 laps.
- Twenty-two of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Hamlin leaves Talladega as the championship leader with a 20-point advantage over second-place Kevin Harvick.

### Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

"Our HaasTooling.com Mustang was fast and they just all started pushing real hard on the bottom or the middle, and then they started spinning. I was like, 'Hopefully, I can make it past it,' but we didn't. It sucks because I thought we had a really fast car. All the guys at SHR built some fast cars coming here, but we'll move on to the next one. It was fun racing up there but it just didn't work out."

### Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Bank of America Roval 400 on Sunday, Oct. 11 at the Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway road course. It is the sixth race of the 10-race playoffs and the final race in the Round of 12. It starts at 2:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBC and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.