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Suárez Soldiers to 27th Place at Kansas

Midrace Pit Strategy Foiled When GF Machining Toyota Picks Up Debris

Date: Oct. 18, 2020
Event: Hollywood Casino 400 (Round 33 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Kansas Speedway in Kansas City (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)
Start/Finish: 27th / 27th (Running, completed 265 of 267 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 339 points

Race Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Started 27th, finished 31st.
- The opening run to the lap-25 competition caution saw Suárez and his GF Machining Solutions Camry drop a pair of positions. He said the car's handling was not so much an issue but he needed help with overall speed. He pitted during the caution for tires and fuel, air-pressure adjustments all around and a packer adjustment. He resumed in 27th when the race went back to green on lap 30.
- The caution flag flew to end the stage on lap 80 with Suárez running 31st and the second car one lap down. He said the rear end of his car felt light the entire run and the front end progressively got more tight over the long run. He pitted during the break for more air pressure adjustments, as well as a track bar adjustment.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Started 32nd, finished 30th.
- Suárez was running 31st on lap 122 when he reported he picked up debris that made his GF Machining Solutions Camry difficult to turn. He had to make an unplanned green-flag stop to remove the debris, and also took tires, fuel, more air pressure and track bar adjustments and resumed in 31st, three laps down.
- The first incident-related caution flag of the day flew on lap 143 with Suárez running 31st. He stayed on track to take the wave-around while he and crew chief Dave Winston discussed changes to be made during the stage break to address overall grip. Suárez restarted 30th when the race went back to green on lap 149, now two laps down, and held position all the way to the end of the stage. He pitted during the break for air pressure and right-rear track bar adjustments.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 161-267):

- Started 30th, finished 27th.
- Suárez held position over the opening 31-lap run of the stage, from the green flag on lap 167 until the caution flag flew for a single-car incident on lap 198. The team planned to leave him on track to take the wave-around up to one lap down, but one of the 25 lead-lap cars stayed on track to negate the wave-around opportunity, and Suárez pitted during the caution on lap 202 for tires and fuel. He was 29th when the race went back to green on lap 205.
- The next green-flag run was a relatively short one as the caution flag appeared for another single-car incident on lap 220. This time, Suárez was able to stay on track to take the wave-around and he restarted 28th and in the Lucky Dog position when the race went back to green on lap 225.
- The race stayed green the rest of the way and Suárez picked up one position before the checkered flag.

Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 GF Machining Solutions Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“We had a pretty positive result the last time we were here (18th place in July), but today we couldn't make our car as good. We had probably a 30th-place car – 29th – and we ended up 27th. The balance of our GF Machining Solutions Toyota was actually decent, but we just needed more speed if we were going to be able to fight for a better result.”

Race Notes:

- Joey Logano won the Hollywood Casino 400 to score his 26th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his third of the season and his third at Kansas. His margin of victory over second-place Kevin Harvick was .312 of a second.
- There were six caution periods for a total of 31 laps.
- Twenty-three of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Kansas with a 21-point advantage over second-place Denny Hamlin.

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule for Suárez and Gaunt Brothers Racing is the Autotrader EchoPark Automotive 500 on Sunday, Oct. 25 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth. It starts at 3:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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