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peacock



DANIEL SUÁREZ

Peacock Toyota Team Set To Cap First Full Cup Series Season at Phoenix

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (Nov. 4, 2020) – Seems in many ways like it was an eternity ago that the No. 96 Peacock Toyota Camry team for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR) and its new driver Daniel Suárez set up shop for the first time together last February at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway to tackle the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series season.

Fast-forward to Sunday's Season Finale 500k at Phoenix Raceway and the crew chief Dave Winston-led GBR team will be closing the curtain on its 2020 efforts at the 36th and final points-paying race on the schedule. It's a significant milestone for the single-car operation, which set out to contest the full Cup Series campaign for the first time since joining stock car racing's elite ranks as a part-time entrant in 2017.

The goal at the outset of the season was to spend 2020 building and fine-tuning all the parts and pieces and processes necessary to hit the ground running in 2021 with the planned introduction of the next-generation NASCAR Cup Series racecar. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early March presented unprecedented challenges for GBR and its fellow competitors as the series steadfastly went about completing the traditional number of 36 points-paying races and two non-points events despite a 10-week hiatus that began after the fourth race at Phoenix.

When the season resumed in mid-May under strict COVID-19 protocols, races – with the exception of the Memorial Day weekend Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway – were conducted without practice or qualifying. That has amounted to valuable track time a single-car team like GBR certainly could have benefitted from under normal circumstances with its eye on the future.

Still, GBR stuck to its plan and weathered its many challenges during this most unusual of seasons, and the goal is to continue building toward the introduction of the next-generation car, which has been pushed back to 2022.

As the No. 96 Peacock Toyota team and Suárez arrive at the Phoenix mile oval for Sunday's season-ending race, they return to the scene of their first of nine top-25 finishes together. One of the hallmarks of the single-car team's season has been its consistency in finishing races. Its 9,217 laps completed ranks 13th among all Cup Series competitors through the first 35 events. Had its season-opening Daytona 500 bid not been derailed by an accident in its qualifying race, the No. 96 Toyota could be ranked as high as sixth in laps completed if it would have finished the race on the lead lap. Only three cars finished more races since the Daytona 500 than the No. 96 Toyota, which was not running at the finish only at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway in October, as well as on the Daytona oval in August, but not before powering its way to the front and leading 19 laps. The GBR Toyota's 20 laps led in all this season may be a modest total, but it ranks ahead of 11 full-time chartered teams.

For the second race in a row this weekend, the No. 96 Toyota welcomes Peacock, NBCUniversal's new streaming service launched in July, which offers 20,000 hours of on-demand movies and shows from NBCUniversal and beyond. There's something for everyone to watch across news and sports, kids programming, late-night, reality and pop culture shows, Spanish-language programming and more. Highlights of live sports offerings include Premier League soccer, U.S. Open golf, French Open tennis, Tour de France cycling and, in 2021, an NFL Wild Card playoff game and the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Fans can visit PeacockTV.com to start watching for free – no credit card required – and can upgrade to Peacock Premium to unlock everything Peacock has to offer, including full seasons of exclusive original series, next-day airings of current TV favorites, and can't-miss live sports events. Peacock Premium is included at no additional cost for millions of Xfinity X1 and Flex customers.

With its eye on the future, the No. 96 team hopes to generate some momentum with its best performance of the season in Sunday's season-ending race in the Arizona desert.

DANIEL SUÁREZ, Driver of the No. 96 Peacock Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

You've scored victories in the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series and in the NASCAR Peak Mexico Series at Phoenix. Your thoughts about heading back there this weekend with the No. 96 Peacock Toyota Camry?

"I like Phoenix a lot. It's always been a good racetrack for me. In 2014 (Mexico Series) and 2016 (Truck Series), we finished in victory lane and I'm looking forward to giving it another shot. You need to have a lot of downforce to be fast there. Like any other place on the West Coast, it's really good to have a lot of support from the Hispanic community and lot of great fans supporting us."

How do you get around the track at Phoenix?

“You can cut the corner at Phoenix. The biggest thing when you do that is the splitter hitting the ground and the car in general hitting the ground because the car is so close to the ground. It’s just difficult to take care of the car doing that. We use extremely low air pressure in the left-side tires and that, combined with the car being so close to the ground already, makes Phoenix really challenging, especially in the short run. In the long run, the car usually gets tight at Phoenix. I really like Phoenix a lot and feel like I always have good speed there, but it’s a difficult place. You have to be very, very patient, take care of the brakes. It’s just a tricky place.”

DANIEL SUÁREZ’S PHOENIX PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2020	3/8	◇FanShield 500k	31	21	Running, 316/316	0	N/A
2019	11/10	Bluegreen Vacations 500k	15	15	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
	3/10	Ticket Guardian 500k	28	23	Running, 311/312	0	N/A
2018	11/11	Can-Am 500k	26	36	Accident, 96/312	0	N/A
	3/11	Ticket Guardian 500k	15	8	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
2017	11/12	Can-Am 500k	10	18	Running, 312/312	0	N/A
	3/19	◇Good Sam 500k	27	7	Running, 314/314	0	N/A

◇ Race length was extended due to overtime finish

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Contact Laz Denes with True Speed Communication

(704) 875-3388, ext. 806 or Laz.Denes@TrueSpeedCommunication.com

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