



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Toyota/Save Mart 350
Infineon Raceway
June 22, 2008

Gordon Now Sixth in the Standings After Third-Place Finish at Sonoma

A last second change in strategy by crew chief Steve Letarte propelled Jeff Gordon to a third-place finish in the Toyota/Save Mart 350 at Infineon Raceway Sunday. Following his seventh top-five finish of the 2008 campaign, the driver of the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet moved up three positions to sixth in the point standings -- 367 behind race winner and points leader Kyle Busch.

Gordon, who started fifth in the first road course event of the season, was running fourth by lap 9. But he began losing positions due to a loss of 'grip.'

"The front and rear tires are gone," Gordon reported to the crew while running 10th on lap 21. "I'm sliding the front tires under braking."

During road course events, pit strategy and the timing of cautions play an important role in determining track position. Since it is difficult to pass on the 10-turn 1.99-mile track and pit stops can be completed without losing a lap, teams elect to do the minimum number of pit stops during the 110-lap event.

The first of two scheduled stops for the drivers began at lap 25, but a caution waved only four laps later before Gordon had made his first scheduled stop. That stop occurred during the caution period on lap 31, but the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion rejoined the field in 21st -- behind all the cars that pitted prior to the yellow flag.

The chassis adjustments made to the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet Impala SS helped Gordon maneuver up to 16th as he approached his final stop.

"We're going to pit in five laps," Letarte radioed Gordon on lap 65. Each time Gordon passed the start/finish line, Letarte counted him down to their final stop scheduled for lap 70. But, as Gordon was making his 68th trip around the track, the strategy changed.

"I want you to pit this lap," Letarte radioed. "I don't trust the cautions."

And Letarte was right. While Gordon was on pit road for his final stop, a caution flag waved. He rejoined the field in 23rd, but gained 12 positions during the caution period when other drivers were forced to make their final stop during the yellow flag.

After restarting 11th on lap 74, Gordon had moved up to seventh by lap 101. Three laps later, he gained four positions in one corner when Gordon avoided the spinning cars of Kevin Harvick, Tony Stewart, Jamie McMurray and Ron Fellows.

A late red flag to clean up oil on the track allowed Gordon one more opportunity to steal victory, but he settled for third due to treacherous track conditions during the final two-lap shootout.

"Those last two laps were two of the toughest laps I have ever made around a race track," Gordon said after the race, referring to the oil dry that coated the track. "It was so slick out there and we were all dirt tracking. It was fun and hairy at the same time.

"I am excited about getting a third place finish. I think it shows what kind of a race team we have. We never give up and fight hard.

"We weren't bad at the end, but we really missed it in the beginning. I don't know if it was air pressure or what, but we just lost all the grip. I couldn't drive it.

"I thought I was going to wreck.

"Steve Letarte made some great adjustments, and he made a great call to come on pit road just as the caution was coming out on our last stop. That gave us a bunch of spots.

"What a great effort by this DuPont Chevrolet team. We just never give up."

Next Sunday, The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits New Hampshire Motor Speedway for the LENOX Industrial Tools 301. TNT begins their live broadcast at 12:30 p.m. EDT while MRN Radio's live broadcast begins at 1:15 p.m. EDT.

(more)

Toyota/Save Mart 350 results (official)

1. Kyle Busch
2. David Gilliland
- 3. Jeff Gordon**
4. Clint Bowyer
5. Casey Mears
6. Juan Pablo Montoya
7. Ryan Newman
8. Matt Kenseth
9. Carl Edwards
10. Tony Stewart

Point standings (official)

1. Kyle Busch
2. Jeff Burton
3. Dale Earnhardt, Jr.
4. Carl Edwards
5. Jimmie Johnson
- 6. Jeff Gordon**
7. Greg Biffle
8. Denny Hamlin
9. Kasey Kahne
10. Clint Bowyer