



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Pocono 500
Pocono Raceway
June 8, 2008

Gordon Now Eighth in Standings After Team DuPont Finishes 14th at Pocono

After stopping for four new tires late in Sunday's Pocono 500 at Pocono Raceway, Jeff Gordon passed 13 cars in the final 19 laps to finish 14th. He is currently eighth in the standings, 317 behind points leader and 43rd-place finisher Kyle Busch. Kasey Kahne won the 200-lap event at the 2.5-mile track.

Gordon, who started 38th, began picking off positions when the green flag waved on the 500-mile event. When the first caution waved at lap 26, he was up to 26th.

Quick pit work by the No. 24 DuPont team during a four-tire stop on lap 28 allowed Gordon to exit pit road 21st, and he gained six more positions before the next caution waved at lap 39. In an effort to gain track position, crew chief Steve Letarte called for right-side tires only during the pit stop. Although Gordon restarted eighth, he struggled with the handling on the No. 24 Chevrolet with only two new tires and fell to 11th.

When a caution waved on lap 67 with threatening skies, Letarte gambled and called Gordon onto pit road for fuel only. A race is declared "official" if it reaches the halfway mark and is stopped due to rain.

"We're now in our fuel window to halfway," Letarte explained to Gordon. Drivers restarting ahead of Gordon would be forced to stop prior to lap 100 while Gordon could run past that distance. Letarte made a similar call in 2007 here that led to victory when rain stopped the event just past lap 100.

The rain did arrive and the race was stopped, but it quickly moved through the area. After the brief red flag to dry the track, Gordon restarted in 22nd position. When a caution waved at lap 121, Letarte tried another strategy to gain valuable track position.

"Do not pit," he radioed the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion. Only one other driver remained on the track during the caution period, and Gordon restarted second on lap 125. But the gamble did not pay dividends, and Gordon lost 13 positions in just three laps.

"The car handles well on new tires," Gordon told Letarte. "We just can't hold our position with no (new) tires or just two."

Gordon was able to stop for four new tires during a caution period on lap 129, but he lost valuable track position and restarted 29th. When the day's final caution waved on lap 177 with Gordon able to go the remaining distance without stopping for fuel, Letarte was faced with a crucial pit call. He could leave Gordon out on the track to restart third with old tires or call him into the pits for new tires. Based on their experience earlier in the race, Letarte called Gordon in for four new tires.

The call left Gordon deep in the field in 27th with less than 20 laps to go, but he was able to gain 13 positions before the checkered flag waved.

"The DuPont Chevrolet handled well with four new tires, but it just couldn't hold the racing line with no tires or only two," Gordon said. "We had to come in there at the end because I think we would have been a sitting duck if we hadn't."

"This has always been a creative place for pit strategy," Letarte explained to the media after the race. "If you have a spectacular car like the No. 9 (Kasey Kahne, winner, had), it's not that important, and they proved it. We had to get creative on pit strategy."

"When that last caution came out, some of those guys stayed out. But my job is to be the realist and, realistically, we didn't have a car good enough to stay out. We had to come get tires and take our lumps."

Next Sunday, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Michigan International Speedway for the LifeLock 400. TNT's live coverage begins at 12:30 p.m. EDT while MRN Radio's live coverage begins at 1:15 p.m. EDT.

(more)

Pocono 500 results (unofficial)

1. Kasey Kahne
2. Brian Vickers
3. Denny Hamlin
4. Dale Earnhardt, Jr.
5. Jeff Burton
6. Jimmie Johnson
7. Matt Kenseth
8. Kurt Busch
9. Carl Edwards
10. Mark Martin

14. Jeff Gordon

Point standings (unofficial)

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