



**DuPont Motorsports Post Race Report
Pep Boys Auto 500 – Atlanta Motor Speedway
October 28, 2007**

Team DuPont Keeps Points Lead Following Seventh-Place Finish at Atlanta

With only six laps remaining in the Pep Boys Auto 500 at Atlanta Motor Speedway on Sunday, Jeff Gordon and Team DuPont thought they had chosen the correct strategy by changing four tires on the No. 24 DuPont/Nicorette Chevrolet during a late race caution period. Unfortunately, two quick cautions after restarts negated that "new tire" advantage and Gordon finished seventh. Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson changed only two tires during the late pit stop and used the valuable track position gained to capture the victory. Gordon now leads Johnson in the point standings by only nine with three races left in the 2007 season.

Gordon, who started eighth, was running sixth as the race approached the 100-lap mark.

"The car is terrible on new tires," he radioed the crew. "We're pretty good on the long runs, though."

But there weren't many "long" runs during the early stages, so crew chief Steve Letarte made some chassis adjustments to help the car's handling on shorter runs during a pit stop on lap 100. Gordon restarted fourth but fell to 21st following a "long" green flag period.

"I need drive off (the corner) now," Gordon explained to Letarte. "I need to be tighter on exit, but I can't be any tighter on entry (into the corner)."

Letarte called for more chassis adjustments during caution flag pit stops on lap 199 and 235, and Gordon began to pick off positions. On lap 243, Gordon moved back into the top 15. By lap 277, he was up to eighth.

With less than 30 laps to go, Gordon bypassed Dale Earnhardt, Jr., for seventh and set his sights on sixth-place Johnson. But the turning point of the race occurred when a caution waved on lap 318 of the scheduled 325-lap race. While Denny Hamlin stayed out on old tires to assume the lead, Johnson and several other drivers elected to stop for right-side tires only while Gordon stopped for four.

On the restart with only three laps to go, Hamlin's car did not accelerate and several drivers wrecked while attempting to maneuver by the slower car. Johnson assumed the lead while Gordon, who had restarted 11th, gained two quick positions during the scramble. But the race was once again under caution and Gordon needed the race to run caution-free to take advantage of the newer tires.

Gordon had one more opportunity to gain positions during the "green-white-checkered" finish -- a two lap sprint to the checkered flag. But, once again, a caution waved soon after the race resumed due to an accident that collected Earnhardt and Jamie McMurray.

"Early in the race, the DuPont/Nicorette Chevy was good on the long runs," Gordon said after the race. "We couldn't get going on the shorter runs, so we made some changes to help the car early in the run."

"Of course, that's when we had that long green flag run. We lost a ton of positions during that run and it looked like we were going to have a bad finish."

"But Steve and the crew never gave up and the car was good there at the end."

"I thought four tires was the correct call on that last stop. I just wish we hadn't had those two quick cautions at the end because I think we could have gained many more positions."

"I thought today was going to be a bad day, so I'm happy to leave here with the points lead. It feels pretty good to get a seventh-place finish out of a 'bad' day."

Next Sunday, the NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series visits Texas Motor Speedway for the Dickies 500. ABC and PRN Radio will broadcast the race live beginning at 3 p.m. CST.

(more)

Pep Boys Auto 500 results (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
2. Carl Edwards
3. Reed Sorenson
4. Matt Kenseth
5. Jeff Burton
6. Clint Bowyer
- 7. Jeff Gordon**
8. Kurt Busch
9. Kasey Kahne
10. Brian Vickers

Point standings (unofficial)

- 1. Jeff Gordon**
2. Jimmie Johnson (-9)
3. Clint Bowyer (-111)
4. Carl Edwards (-261)
5. Tony Stewart (-322)
6. Kyle Busch (-328)
7. Kevin Harvick (-392)
8. Jeff Burton (-400)
9. Kurt Busch (-419)
10. Denny Hamlin (-424)
11. Matt Kenseth (-448)
12. Martin Truex, Jr. (-513)