



### Team DuPont Finishes 10th at Phoenix

"It's over," said Jeff Gordon, referring to the championship battle with Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson. Gordon, who finished 10th in the Checker Auto Parts 500 at Phoenix International Raceway on Sunday, "threw in the towel" when he congratulated Johnson in Victory Lane following Johnson's fourth consecutive victory. With only the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway remaining, Gordon trails his teammate by 86 markers.

"We can still win the championship, and we'll definitely take it if we do," Gordon said. "But it wouldn't be how we wanted to win it. Our teammates have stomped us recently."

Gordon, who started the penultimate race from the third position, was running fifth when a caution waved on lap 118 of the 312-lap race. Crew chief Steve Letarte called Gordon onto pit road for new tires and chassis adjustments while many of the leaders stayed on the track. While Gordon restarted 15th, he moved up to fourth when those teams pitted during the next caution on lap 143.

By lap 159, Gordon had driven his No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet up to second. But he was fighting a loose condition when he stopped during a round of green-flag stops on lap 199.

"I'm loose getting into the corner and loose off," Gordon radioed the crew on lap 226 while running fifth. "But I'm tight in the middle."

More chassis adjustments were made during a caution flag stop on lap 235, but Gordon began losing positions. He was ninth when the event's final caution waved on lap 270.

After stopping for four new tires, Gordon restarted 12th -- many teams chose not to pit or stopped for only two tires. Gordon gained two positions during the final 38 laps to grab Team DuPont's 29th top-10 finish of the season -- tying the modern-era record set by Dale Jarrett in 1999 (modern era is 1972 - present).

"I'm disappointed," Gordon said after the race. "We really missed the handling on the car today.

"I really thought this was going to be our year, but the 48 team has really stepped up their game. They have won four straight and really taken control of the championship.

"We'll do everything we can in Miami to win the race, but that may not be enough."

The Ford 400 will be broadcast live on ABC and MRN Radio next Sunday beginning at 3 p.m. EST.

#### Checker Auto Parts 500 results (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
2. Greg Biffle
3. Matt Kenseth
4. Tony Stewart
5. Ryan Newman
6. Kevin Harvick
7. Martin Truex, Jr.
8. Kyle Busch
9. Jeff Burton
- 10. Jeff Gordon**

#### Point standings (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
- 2. Jeff Gordon (-86)**
3. Clint Bowyer (-241)
4. Kyle Busch (-387)
5. Tony Stewart (-403)
6. Matt Kenseth (-469)
7. Kevin Harvick (-479)
8. Jeff Burton (-483)
9. Carl Edwards (-505)
10. Kurt Busch (-516)
11. Martin Truex, Jr. (-563)
12. Denny Hamlin (-599)