



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
3M Performance 400
Michigan International Speedway
August 17, 2008

Accident Relegates Gordon to 42nd-Place Finish at Michigan

The No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet was the fastest car on the track at lap 75 of Sunday's 3M Performance 400 at Michigan International Speedway. Unfortunately, an untimely slow pit stop for the No. 24 team at lap 86 led to an unfortunate chain of events for Jeff Gordon that ended with a wrecked race car and a 42nd-place finish. Gordon fell three spots to ninth in the standings and is 82 points ahead of the cutoff position with only three races remaining before the 12-driver field is set for the "Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup."

Gordon, who qualified fifth, fought a tight condition during the early stages of the 200-lap event. He was running fourth, though, when he stopped for four tires, fuel and chassis adjustments during a caution period on lap 23. After restarting sixth, Gordon explained the handling situation to the crew.

"I'm tight at the beginning of the run," Gordon said on lap 40 while running sixth. "I'm not bad when I slow the entry of the corner down."

Letarte called for more chassis adjustments during a lap 66 green flag pit stop, and Gordon returned to the track in sixth – 10.8 seconds behind the leader. By lap 83, he was up to fourth and had cut the lead down to 5.5 seconds.

"The middle of the corner is 'sporty,'" he radioed the crew during a caution period on lap 84. "It's just a little loose on entry and exit."

But Gordon's day went from good to bad during a lap 86 pit stop. Prior to the race, lug nuts are glued onto the wheels of new sets of tires. During a stop, the tire changer loosens the lug nuts of the wheels on the car and then pulls the wheel off. The new wheel is put on the studs, and the lug nut should sit on the tapered end of the stud. Five lug nuts are tightened on each wheel, and Gordon pulls away.

During this stop, the front tire changer tightened four of the lug nuts on the right front wheel but noticed the fifth was hanging off the stud – held there by the tacky glue. When he reached to grab the lug nut, it fell underneath the car. He located an extra and tightened it, but the delay cost Gordon 11 positions.

The four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion restarted 15th on lap 89. One lap later while exiting turn four, Gordon's car and teammate Jimmie Johnson's car touched while racing four-wide. Although there appeared to be no damage to the No. 24 car, bent sheet metal cut the right front tire down on lap 95 and Gordon slammed into the turn 2 wall.

The crew worked hard to repair the extensive damage, and Gordon returned to the track. But, unable to gain or lose any more positions, the team called it a day with less than 40 laps remaining. Gordon finished 42nd in the race won by Carl Edwards.

"We finally had an awesome race car and just didn't have the total package today," Gordon said from the garage area. "It's disappointing because that is the way our season has gone. When the pit stops are awesome, the car isn't handling right. When the car is great – like today, we had issues in the pits.

"All we can do is go out there, focus and do our jobs in the next three races. This was one of the best weekends we've had in a long time, and that was just a really unfortunate ending."

Next Saturday night, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Bristol Motor Speedway for the Sharpie 500. ESPN's live coverage begins at 7 p.m. EDT while PRN Radio's live coverage begins at 8 p.m. EDT.

(more)

3M Performance 400 results (unofficial)

1. Carl Edwards
2. Kyle Busch
3. David Ragan
4. Greg Biffle
5. Matt Kenseth
6. Mark Martin
7. Brian Vickers
8. Kevin Harvick
9. Elliott Sadler
10. Jamie McMurray

42. Jeff Gordon

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Kyle Busch
2. Carl Edwards
3. Jimmie Johnson
4. Dale Earnhardt, Jr.
5. Jeff Burton
6. Tony Stewart
7. Greg Biffle
8. Kevin Harvick
- 9. Jeff Gordon**
10. Matt Kenseth