



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Dickies 500
Texas Motor Speedway
November 2, 2008

Gordon Up to Fifth in Standings Following Second-Place Finish at Texas

Jeff Gordon and Team DuPont battled back from a lap down to finish second in the Dickies 500 at Texas Motor Speedway on Sunday. Carl Edwards won the event while Gordon's runner-up finish moved him up to fifth in the standings, 255 points behind leader Jimmie Johnson with two races remaining in the 2008 season.

On Friday, Gordon secured his first ever pole position at the 1.5-mile track. On Sunday, he led the first 15 laps before dropping to third on lap 16.

"I'm tight in the center (of the corner) and loose off," Gordon explained to the crew on lap 20. During a round of green-flag stops at lap 52, crew chief Steve Letarte made an air pressure adjustment during the four-tire stop.

"Did the changes we made help?" Letarte asked on lap 105 prior to their next green-flag pit stop.

"Yes, but I need more," the driver of the No. 24 Chevrolet responded.

While minor adjustments were made during the stop, the changes hurt the handling.

"I'm sliding sideways getting into the corner, but plowing (tight) the middle," Gordon told the team on lap 127 while running eighth.

Letarte called for a track bar adjustment during a caution period on lap 143, but Gordon was "wrecking all the way to the middle" of the corner following the change. He slid to 17th -- one lap down -- before a caution waved on lap 241.

"The track has changed," Gordon radioed Letarte during the caution period. With the sun setting behind the grandstands, the track temperature had cooled creating much quicker lap times.

Once again, chassis adjustments were made during the four-tire stop. Gordon restarted 16th, and was the beneficiary of the "lucky dog" -- the free pass onto the lead lap for the first car scored one or more laps down -- at lap 263.

During the caution period, Team DuPont's four-tire stop included chassis adjustments and instruction for the fuel cell to be "packed." With only 68 laps remaining, the No. 24 team was planning to run the remaining distance without stopping.

After restarting 15th, Gordon remained in that position until 22 laps to go. On lap 312, Matt Kenseth was the first of the leaders to stop for fuel. One by one, drivers peeled off the banking to stop for fuel, moving Gordon up to fifth with only 11 laps to go. One lap later, the four-time NASCAR Cup champion was scored third.

With only five to go, Gordon was up to second. But Carl Edwards was able to conserve enough fuel to coast under the checkered flag first.

"I was pretty optimistic when the green flag dropped," Gordon said after the race. "The car felt great at the start, and then it started to go away a little bit. But we stayed in the top five.

"Typical Texas, though, for us. We just started losing the handle on it as the sun went down and we lost a ton of track position on that one run when we got real loose. Man, it was a struggle when that happened, and we ended up losing a lap.

"Steve Letarte made a great call there with the fuel gamble at the end, and that's what it takes to come home second on a day like today. He was apologizing to me because he thought he was going to get us a win.

"I said, 'Man, you can't apologize about finishing second on a day like today. That was like a win.'"

Next Sunday, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Phoenix International Raceway for the Checker O'Reilly Auto Parts 500. ABC's live coverage begins at 3 p.m. EST while MRN Radio's live coverage begins at 2:45 p.m. EST.

(more)

Dickies 500 results (unofficial)

1. Carl Edwards
- 2. Jeff Gordon**
3. Jamie McMurray
4. Clint Bowyer
5. Greg Biffle
6. Kyle Busch
7. Kevin Harvick
8. Martin Truex, Jr.
9. Matt Kenseth
10. David Reutimann

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
2. Carl Edwards (-106)
3. Greg Biffle (-143)
4. Jeff Burton (-212)
- 5. Jeff Gordon (-255)**
6. Clint Bowyer (-267)
7. Kevin Harvick (-279)
8. Matt Kenseth (-393)
9. Tony Stewart (-404)
10. Kyle Busch (-428)
11. Dale Earnhardt, Jr. (-429)
12. Denny Hamlin (-431)