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AFTER BACK PROCEDURE, GORDON READY FOR 600 MILES AT LMS

CONCORD, N.C. (May 19, 2009) - For the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, it is back to points racing this Sunday night at Lowe's Motor Speedway. For Jeff Gordon, the 600-miler provides a test for his back after a recent procedure to ease pain.

Gordon, who has experienced progressively worse back pain over the past few years, had treatment on Monday. The driver of the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet hopes the procedure will alleviate much – if not all – of the pain.

"I had a facet block procedure done on my back on Monday and it went well," said Gordon. "I was a little sore after the procedure, but I'll definitely take that brief bit of soreness if it stops the recurring back pain I've had.

"I hope that will end the back issues I've been having, but it's too early to tell if that fixed the problem."

Never mind 600 miles on Sunday, Gordon may have a better understanding of the results of the procedure by midweek. He is scheduled to participate in "Ultimate Speed" on Wednesday – a karting event that will raise money for the Jeff Gordon Foundation and the Jeff Gordon Children's Hospital in Concord.

"That event is always a lot of fun, and it shouldn't be a strain on my back," said Gordon. "Even running karts I've felt some discomfort in my back, so that event may provide an early indication of how well the procedure worked."

On Thursday, the focus turns to 3,400-pound stock cars at Lowe's Motor Speedway. In 32 starts at the 1.5-mile track, Gordon has five wins including his first Cup Series victory in this event in 1994, seven poles, 15 top-fives and 18 top-10's.

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“This is a grueling race – 600 miles here is tough,” said Gordon, who leads the point standings by 29. “It’s tough on equipment, and it’s tough mentally. You have to mentally stay in the game and be focused for 600 miles.

“I’m really looking forward to the event. Obviously, I want to see how my back does, but I also think we can challenge for the win.”

Last Saturday night, Gordon had worked himself into the lead when the final 10-lap segment began in the All-Star race here. But an accident while battling three-wide for the lead in the final segment ended his chance at victory.

“We ran well during the All-Star event, so that gives us some confidence heading into this weekend,” said Gordon. “We’ve also run well on the mile-and-a-halves this year with a win at Texas.

“The key is to survive the early stages when the sun is out and be in position to battle for the win at night.”

Which may lead Gordon back to Victory Lane.

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