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SECOND-PLACE GORDON CONCERNED ABOUT GAP TO NINTH AND 11TH

LOUDON, N.H. (June 23, 2009) - Entering Sunday's Lenox Industrial Tools 301 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway (NHMS), Jeff Gordon is only 84 markers behind leader Tony Stewart. With 10 races remaining before the 12-driver "Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup" field is set, a strong summer stretch could close the gap to ninth place.

And the gap to 11th.

Gordon, who is currently second in the standings, holds a 366-point advantage over 13th-place. While the first priority is to secure a berth in the Chase, the driver of the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet is also keeping tabs on bonus points.

Following race No. 26, points will be reset for the 12 participating drivers with 10 bonus points awarded for each win accrued to that point. Kyle Busch and Gordon's teammate Mark Martin have collected the most wins (3) so far this season, and they are ninth and 11th in the points, respectively. But both drivers are also precariously close to the bubble – less than 50 points separate ninth from 13th.

"Our goal is to make it into the Chase," said Gordon, who has one win (Texas) so far in 2009. "But you can't help but keep an eye on the bonus points. Right now, I know we're 20 points behind those with three wins, so I'd like to cut – or possibly eliminate – that gap before the Chase begins.

"Over the next 10 races, we're looking to build momentum. You want to enter the 'Chase' with the competition believing you are the team to beat. And a win this weekend can do a lot for a team and a driver. The 10 bonus points, as I mentioned, are important.

(more)

“But the first race of the ‘Chase’ is here, and that’s a confidence boost when you return as the track’s previous race winner.”

In 28 starts at the New England speedway, Gordon has three wins, three poles, 12 top-fives and 15 top-10's. While he had a pair of second-place finishes here in 2007, strong runs in 2008 are not evidenced by an 11th-place finish in June and a 14th-place result in September.

“We drove up into the top five in June here last year, but a late pit stop and rain hurt our finishing position,” said Gordon, referring to a pit stop for fuel that was followed closely by rain ending the race prematurely. “In September, we lost about 10 positions late when I had to slow to avoid a spinning car.”

But that was not the last time Team DuPont visited the 1.058-mile facility.

“We participated in a Goodyear tire test here in April, and I don’t know how beneficial that was,” said crew chief Steve Letarte, a native of Portland, Maine. “It was 31 or 32 degrees then, and those conditions are much different than what I expect we’ll see this weekend.

“We’ve had some good runs here recently, and I hope that continues this weekend. It’s been a while since Jeff has been to Victory Lane at this track, and I’d like to change that.

“Sooner rather than later.”

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