



**DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Budweiser Shootout
Daytona International Speedway
February 7, 2009**

Team DuPont Notches a Fourth-Place Finish in 'Wild' Budweiser Shootout

Saturday night's Budweiser Shootout at Daytona International Speedway was a non-points event to kick off the 2009 season, and it was a wild affair won by Kevin Harvick. Jeff Gordon dodged numerous multi-car accidents to position himself near the front as the race drew to a close, but he was shuffled back during the green-white-checkered finish and crossed the line in fourth.

Starting positions were determined by a draw, and Gordon chose the 28th starting position -- out of 28. But he was up to 23rd by lap 4 when he was forced to take evasive action to narrowly miss the spinning cars driven by Scott Speed and Joey Lagano.

"That was an incredible piece of driving," crew chief Steve Letarte told Gordon over the team radio. "I just saw the replay and I don't know how you made it through."

"I may have damaged the front 'splitter' when I drove on the apron, but it could have been much worse," Gordon replied.

Letarte called Gordon onto pit road to change four tires and assess any damage, but only minor repairs were needed. Gordon restarted 21st on lap 8 and maneuvered up to eighth by lap 25 -- the only intermission of the 75-lap event.

When the race resumed, Gordon wasted little time in moving forward. By lap 30, he was pacing the field. But, one lap later, he was in the middle of another multi-car accident in turn 1.

"We got some damage that time," Gordon radioed the crew. "They went four-wide."

But the damage was minor and, after stopping for tires and fuel, Gordon restarted sixth. Once again, Gordon worked his way through traffic and was up to second by lap 41, but he was shuffled back 12th by lap 49.

The frantic jockeying for position was evident with 20 laps to go. Gordon, who was running fifth at that time, worked his way by teammate Dale Earnhardt, Jr., on lap 61 to take the lead, but "Junior" slid up the track and almost collected the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet as the field exited turn 2. The lost momentum equaled lost positions -- Gordon crossed the line on lap 62 in 12th position. One lap later, Gordon was on pit road for new tires during a caution period.

"I'd rather give you four new tires for these final laps," Letarte explained to Gordon. "You're in 14th with 10 laps to go."

The four-time NASCAR Series champion wasted no time in putting those new tires to good use. With five laps to go, he was up to 10th. When he crossed the line with four laps to go, he was seventh. With three to go, Gordon was running second and challenging for the lead. But a late-race caution set up a two-lap dash for the win.

Gordon restarted second in the outside line with Harvick right behind, but Harvick quickly dove into the low line -- leaving Gordon with no drafting help. As the field received the one to go signal, Gordon was down to ninth. He narrowly dodged one more multi-car wreck to end the event in fourth position.

"I couldn't even tell you what was going on that last lap," Gordon said after the race. "I was holding it wide open looking for every bit of momentum and gap and hole that I could and anyone to push me or go with. We were four wide coming off of turn two. There wasn't enough room to be four wide, and I was pushing Casey Mears."

"We got a heck of a run down the back straightaway and we starting catching the field ahead of us and, man, they just all spread out and started wrecking."

"It was a heck of a race, but it just got a little bit too wild. I hope the Daytona 500 is not like this. A 500-mile race, we have to use our heads more than that. Just because this was a shorter race, I think guys were laying it out there on the line quite a bit more."

On Sunday, the top-2 positions for the Daytona 500 will be set during qualifying runs while the remaining positions will be determined during Thursday's Gatorade Duels qualifying races. Next Sunday, the field will take the green flag for the Daytona 500 just past 3:30 p.m. EST. Fox and MRN Radio will broadcast the race live.

Budweiser Shootout results (unofficial)

1. Kevin Harvick
2. Jamie McMurray
3. Tony Stewart
4. *Jeff Gordon*
5. A.J. Allmendinger
6. Kasey Kahne
7. Carl Edwards
8. Matt Kenseth
9. Kurt Busch
10. Kyle Busch