



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Pocono 500
Pocono Raceway
June 7, 2009

Team DuPont Coasts to Fourth-Place Finish at Pocono

Tony Stewart stretched his points lead to 71 over Jeff Gordon after stretching his fuel mileage in the Pocono 500 at Pocono Raceway on Sunday to score his first victory as an owner-driver. Gordon ran out of fuel in the last corner of the last lap but coasted to a fourth-place finish.

With points determining the starting lineup for the 200-lap event after rain washed out Friday's qualifying session, Gordon started second. He led the first lap -- earning five valuable championship points in the process -- but had fallen to seventh when the day's second caution waved at lap 12.

"I'm way, way too tight," Gordon radioed the crew. "I'm getting killed through the middle of turn 1."

Gordon returned to the track after a four-tire stop that included a major chassis adjustment. After restarting 14th, he methodically worked his way up through the field during a long green-flag run. By lap 58 of the 200-lap event, Gordon was back in the top-five and he remained there until just past the halfway mark.

But when a caution waved at lap 103, a new NASCAR rule gave the driver of the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet fits. Starting with Sunday's race, all restarts will be double-file with lead lap cars up front (previously, all lead lap cars lined up nose-to-tail in the outside lane while lapped cars filled the inside lane). Gordon restarted fifth on lap 108, but he began losing positions quickly. By lap 122, Gordon was running 16th and, by lap 132, he was mired in 23rd.

"I don't know if it's tires or all this traffic, but we're not very good right now," Gordon radioed crew chief Steve Letarte. Letarte called Gordon onto pit road for four new tires on lap 134 -- ahead of their scheduled pit stop -- and the strategy worked. When green-flag pit stops were completed, Gordon was up to 18th.

When another caution waved at lap 157, Letarte decided to gamble with threatening skies approaching.

"Stay out, stay out," he radioed Gordon. "We're going to gamble to see if it rains." It did rain lightly, but only for a brief time. When the sun peeked back through the clouds, Gordon was forced to stop for fuel on lap 163.

"It's going to be tough for all those guys ahead of us to make it," Letarte informed Gordon. "We're about a half a lap short, but we're not stopping again."

After restarting 18th on lap 165, Gordon began picking off positions -- on the track and when other teams were forced to pit for fuel. With 15 laps to go, Gordon was up to ninth. With two laps to go, he bypassed Ryan Newman for fifth and, on the final lap, Gordon passed teammate Jimmie Johnson -- who was out of fuel -- for fourth. After running out of fuel in the last corner, the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion coasted under the checkered flag.

"This is a tough place to save fuel so I am really impressed with those guys that finished ahead of us," said Gordon after the race. "I am really proud of Steve Letarte and this whole DuPont crew for what they did to get me out there in that position and be able to go all the way. You have to get the finishes any way you can and we never gave up.

"We were pretty good for a long time. That double-file restart killed us. Aero-wise, my car was good in a single-file line and when we were in clean air. But, whew, it was a handful there in all that dirty air. We got shuffled back there and it kind of worked to our favor because we tried to win it with the rain.

"That didn't work so we'll take a solid fourth-place finish and head to Michigan."

Next Sunday, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Michigan Speedway for the LifeLock 400. TNT begins their live coverage at 12:30 p.m. EDT while MRN Radio's live coverage begins at 1:15 p.m. EDT.

Pocono 500 results (unofficial)

1. Tony Stewart
2. Carl Edwards
3. David Reutimann

4. Jeff Gordon

5. Ryan Newman
6. Marcos Ambrose
7. Jimmie Johnson
8. Juan Pablo Montoya
9. Jeff Burton
10. Sam Hornish, Jr.

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Tony Stewart

2. Jeff Gordon

3. Jimmie Johnson
4. Ryan Newman
5. Kurt Busch
6. Carl Edwards
7. Greg Biffle
8. Matt Kenseth
9. Kyle Busch
10. Jeff Burton