



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Pepsi Max 400
Auto Club Speedway
October 10, 2010

Gordon Now Fourth in Standings After Top-10 Finish at California

"We were all playing bumper cars down the back straightaway," Jeff Gordon said after rallying from 24th with 13 laps to go to finish ninth in the Pepsi Max 400 at Auto Club Speedway on Sunday. "I went for a hole in (turns) 3 and 4 and the car stuck.

"It was a great team effort to come back and finish ninth."

Gordon, who started the race from the 17th position, quickly charged through the field in his specially painted No. 24 DuPont/Pepsi Max Chevrolet after the green flag waved. By lap 15 of 200, he was running fifth and, by lap 46, he was leading.

The four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion stopped for new tires and a chassis adjustment on lap 54, and Gordon remained in the top three past the halfway mark.

"We're good, but loose," Gordon reported to crew chief Steve Letarte on lap 105 after passing teammate Jimmie Johnson for the runner-up spot. When a caution waved seven laps later, a quick four-tire stop by the No. 24 team allowed Gordon to win the race off pit road.

But when green-flag racing returned, so did the loose condition in Gordon's Chevrolet. He fell to fourth in a car that was "the loosest it's been all day" before more adjustments were made during a lap-137 stop.

"I don't know if it was a set of tires or what," Gordon said after the restart. "It's plowing the middle of the corner now."

But when the 82-time winner visited pit road for new tires and adjustments on lap 156, he was hit with a pit road speeding penalty. The penalty forced Gordon to restart at the tail end of the longest line in 29th with only 41 laps to go.

While he quickly moved up to 24th, Gordon stalled in that position while fighting a loose car and the 'dirty air' of racing mid-pack. Letarte was given another opportunity to work on the car during a lap-182 caution, and Gordon battled from 24th to 13th on new tires during a green-flag run that lasted only six laps.

Letarte again called Gordon onto pit road for tires when the day's final caution waved on lap 193. The call was to change right-side rubber only, and Gordon would have newer tires when the race restarted with only two laps to go and the California native restarting 16th.

When the green-flag waved, Gordon and company quickly made it six-wide exiting turn 2. Gordon cleared the traffic in turn 4 and crossed under the start/finish line in 10th. On the final lap, he barely nipped David Reutimann at the checkered flag for the ninth position and four more valuable championship points.

"We ran well and we were a top-five car," said Gordon, who moved up to fourth in the standings and trails leader Johnson by 85 points with six races remaining in the 2010 season. "But I pushed it too much down pit road one stop and got a penalty.

"I take the blame for that.

"Steve made some great calls there at the end to give us a chance with new tires. We were five or six-wide off turn 2 and it got really narrow. I was just hanging on.

"It was a really nice comeback by the team to finish ninth."

Next Saturday night, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Charlotte Motor Speedway for the Bank of America 500. ABC and PRN Radio will broadcast the 7:30 p.m. EDT race live.

Pepsi Max 400 results (unofficial)

1. Tony Stewart
2. Clint Bowyer
3. Jimmie Johnson
4. Kasey Kahne
5. Ryan Newman
6. Mark Martin
7. Kevin Harvick
8. Denny Hamlin
9. **Jeff Gordon**
10. David Reutimann

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Jimmie Johnson
2. Denny Hamlin (-36)
3. Kevin Harvick (-54)
4. **Jeff Gordon (-85)**
5. Tony Stewart (-107)
6. Kurt Busch (-140)
7. Carl Edwards (-162)
8. Jeff Burton (-177)
9. Kyle Busch (-187)
10. Greg Biffle (-215)
11. Matt Kenseth (-241)
12. Clint Bowyer (-247)