



DuPont Motorsports Post-Race Report
Coke Zero 400
Daytona International Speedway
July 3, 2010

Team DuPont Finishes Third at Daytona in Race that Ends on Fourth

There were plenty of fireworks during the annual 400-miler at Daytona International Speedway that began on Saturday night and ended early on July 4th, but Jeff Gordon was able to narrowly avoid numerous wrecks to post his series-high ninth top-five finish of the 2010 season. Kevin Harvick won the event and continues to lead the standings while Gordon's third-place finish moved him up three positions to second.

Rain canceled Friday's qualifying session, and it delayed the start of Saturday night's event, as well. With the field lined up by points, Gordon rolled off the grid fifth. By lap 10, the No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet was in front of the field.

But things can change quickly on the high-banked track, and Gordon was shuffled back to 15th by lap 14. He slowly worked his way through traffic and was up to fifth by lap 50 in a car he described as "driving good."

After stopping for four new tires during a caution period on lap 57, Gordon restarted second on lap 63. One lap later, he was pacing the field again. But he lost positions as the race approached the 100-lap mark, and the four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion was one of the first drivers to hit pit road during a cycle of green-flag pit stops. Gordon returned to the track one lap down, but regained the lap back when leader Kyle Busch spun -- after contact with the No. 42 car driven by Juan Pablo Montoya -- to bring out a caution. Gordon, who was drafting with the pair, dove low to avoid contact during the dustup.

Once the race restarted, Gordon took another turn as the leader before sliding back to fourth on lap 116. Once again, the 82-time winner narrowly avoided being collected in a multi-car accident when David Ragan spun while racing on the outside of Gordon's Impala. The "big one," though, was still yet to come.

On lap 147, Kurt Busch and Jeff Burton made contact on the backstretch that triggered a 19-car accident. Gordon once again dove low as the melee collected cars in front, to the side and immediately behind him.

With the field size severely diminished, Gordon restarted sixth with eight laps remaining. He made quick work of those ahead of him and was leading the event with two laps to go. But teammates Clint Bowyer and Harvick drafted past the six-time Daytona winner on the backstretch on lap 158 -- droppicking Gordon back to fourth as Kasey Kahne followed the pair past him.

There would be one more chance, though, as a caution waved later that lap. For the green-white-checked finish, Gordon restarted behind leader Bowyer and quickly bypassed him in turn 1. But Gordon and Kahne were unable to mount a serious challenge to Harvick before the checkered flag waved.

"I'm just happy to survive one of these restrictor-plate races," said Gordon after the event. "We were able to avoid several wrecks including the 'big one' and were in position to battle for the win. When I took the lead with a few to go, I thought we were in good position. But Bowyer and Harvick lined up and I was a sitting duck.

"I don't know what happened on the final restart. It just seemed like Clint (Bowyer) was riding the brakes and we weren't going anywhere. I went to pass him, and that kind of just messed up our momentum -- and our shot at winning.

"But we're pretty happy to finish third."

Next Saturday night, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series visits Chicagoland Speedway for the LifeLock.com 400. TNT and MRN Radio will broadcast the 7:30 p.m. EDT race live.

"Non-Pepsi" 400 results (unofficial)

1. Kevin Harvick
2. Kasey Kahne
3. **Jeff Gordon**
4. Dale Earnhardt, Jr.
5. Jeff Burton
6. Carl Edwards
7. Kurt Busch
8. Reed Sorenson
9. Mike Bliss
10. Scott Speed

Point standings (unofficial)

1. Kevin Harvick
2. **Jeff Gordon**
3. Jimmie Johnson
4. Kurt Busch
5. Denny Hamlin
6. Kyle Busch
7. Matt Kenseth
8. Jeff Burton
9. Tony Stewart
10. Greg Biffle