

Bowyer Finishes 18th at Indy

Race: Brickyard 400
Date: July 26, 2009
Location: Indianapolis Motor Speedway
Start Position: 10th
Finish Position: 18th
Points Position: 16th (Lost one position)

SPEEDWAY, Indiana – While their 18th-place finish at Indianapolis Motor Speedway wasn't exactly what Clint Bowyer and the Cheerios/Hamburger Helper team were hoping for, the Chase for the Sprint Cup hopefuls managed to escape the Brickyard with minimal point loss thanks to the misfortunes of others.

With six races remaining before the 12-team Chase for the Sprint Cup playoff field is set, the 30-year-old driver is 16th in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series point standings, 151 markers behind Matt Kenseth in 12th.

Bowyer recorded the 14th- and ninth-fastest times in Friday's twin practice sessions, and followed that up by touring the 2.5-mile oval in 50.063 seconds at an average speed of 179.773 mph in Saturday afternoon's weather-delayed qualifying session to earn the tenth starting spot for the 16th running of the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard.

The Emporia, Kansas, native ran inside the top 10 for the opening segment of the 160-lap event, only giving up positions when green flag pit stops began at lap 30.

As cloud cover came and went over the 2.5 mile speedway, the inconsistent track conditions threw the handling of Bowyer's Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Chevrolet for a loop. Despite his struggles, the two-time NSCS winner maintained his position as the race continued under long green-flag runs.

As the race entered its final stages, the engine of Dale Earnhardt, Jr.'s No. 88 machine expired to bring out the final caution flag of the event at lap 129. Running in the 13th position, Bowyer and crew chief Shane Wilson agreed to come to pit road for right-side tires and a chassis adjustment to give them a final shot at improving their position. Unfortunately, most teams chose to stay on the racing surface to maintain their track position, resulting in Bowyer lining up 18th for the lap-136 restart. Despite his best efforts, Bowyer was unable to improve his position over the remaining 24 laps.

Jimmie Johnson captured his third Brickyard trophy and third win of the 2009 season, beating teammate Mark Martin to the checkered flag by .400 seconds. Tony Stewart, Greg Biffle and Brian Vickers rounded out the top-five finishers.

Bowyer's RCR teammates Kevin Harvick, Casey Mears and Jeff Burton finished sixth, 19th and 25th, respectively.

Next weekend, the Sprint Cup Series heads to the Pocono Mountains for the Sunoco American Red Cross Pennsylvania 500 at Pocono Raceway. Live coverage of the event will be televised on ESPN Sunday, August 2 beginning at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The race will also be covered live on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius/XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying for the 21st stop on the 36-race schedule will be televised live on ESPN2 Friday, July 31 beginning at 3:30 p.m. EDT.