

Bowyer Finishes 11th at Dover

Race: Autism Speaks 400 presented by Heluva Good!
Date: May 31, 2009
Location: Dover (Del.) International Speedway
Start Position: 25th
Finish Position: 11th
Points Position: 16th (Gained one position)

DOVER, Delaware – Clint Bowyer was able to overcome an early setback to finish 11th in Sunday's Autism Speaks 400 at Dover International Speedway.

The solid finish allowed him to advance one spot in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series point standings. With 13 races remaining before the 12-team Chase for the Sprint Cup playoff field is set, the 30-year-old driver is 16th in the standings, 118 markers behind 12th-place Mark Martin.

Bowyer toured the concrete oval in 23.290 seconds at an average speed of 154.573 mph in Friday afternoon's qualifying session, placing him 25th in the starting lineup for Sunday afternoon's race.

The two-time NSCS winner consistently recorded lap times equal to or better than the race leader and advanced his No. 33 Hartford Chevrolet through the field, breaking inside the top 10 at lap 84.

With the field continuing under green-flag conditions, the leaders began to come to pit road for service at lap 103. Wanting his driver to stay on track in an attempt to gain track position, crew chief Shane Wilson hesitated to call Bowyer to pit road until lap 114 when he brought the Hartford Chevrolet to the attention of the over-the-wall crew to take on four tires, fuel and a chassis adjustment. As Bowyer made his way off pit road, NASCAR called a caution for debris on the race track, trapping Bowyer two laps behind the race leader.

The Emporia, Kansas, native worked diligently to gain back his lost laps over the next 174 laps. His persistence paid off when he earned one lap back as a result of hard racing and the second when the No. 7 of Robby Gordon brought out a caution flag, with Bowyer in position to cash in on the free-pass rule.

With a second chance at contending for the win, the fourth-year NSCS driver wasted little time in advancing from his 19th-place position at lap 290 to 10th by lap 335. Bowyer continued his late-race charge, moving up to eighth on the scoring pylon at lap 344.

A caution 20 laps later provided a final chance for the leaders to come to pit road for service. Wilson and Bowyer agreed to take on four tires when some opted for just right-sides, resulting in additional time on pit road that would drop the No. 33 The Hartford Chevy to 11th on the lap-368 restart. Bowyer waged a spirited battle with teammate Casey Mears for the 10th position in the closing laps, but was forced to settle for an 11th-place finish when the checkered flag flew.

Bowyer's Richard Childress Racing teammates Mears, Jeff Burton and Kevin Harvick finished ninth, 16th and 17th, respectively.

Jimmie Johnson picked up his second win of the 2009 season, beating Tony Stewart to the checkered flag by .861 seconds. Greg Biffle finished third, Matt Kenseth fourth and Kurt Busch fifth.

NASCAR's senior circuit heads to the Pocono Mountains next weekend for the first of two stops in Long Pond, Penn.

Live coverage of the Pocono 500 at Pocono Raceway will take the green flag Sunday, June 7 beginning at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The race will be televised live on TNT and broadcast on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying for the 14th points-paying race on the 2009 schedule will be telecast live on SPEED Friday, June 5 beginning at 3:30 p.m. EDT.