

Top-10 Finish for Bowyer, Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Team at Infineon

Race: Toyota/Save Mart 350

Date: June 21, 2009

Location: Infineon Raceway

Start Position: 26th

Finish Position: 8th

Points Position: 16th

(Maintained position)

SONOMA, Calif. – Clint Bowyer and the Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Racing team changed their strategy in the later stages of Sunday's Toyota/Save Mart 350 to pick up an eighth-place finish at Infineon Raceway.

With 10 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, 65 markers behind Juan Pablo Montoya in 12th.

Bowyer recorded a time of 77.612 (92.305 mph) in Friday afternoon's qualifying session to earn the 26th starting position, but recovered well in Saturday's dual practice sessions where the two-time NSCS winner recorded the third- and seventh-fastest times. For the second week in a row, Bowyer and crew chief Shane Wilson felt confident they had a good setup underneath them and agreed to park their Chevrolet after running just nine laps in the latter session.

The Emporia, Kansas, native worked diligently to overcome his qualifying setback in the opening half of the race. His hard work advanced him to 16th before a spin involving Patrick Carpentier unfolded directly in front of the Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Chevrolet at lap 28, forcing Bowyer to come to a complete stop in Turn 11. The incident dropped Bowyer back to the 25th position, but his never-quit attitude allowed him to regain his lost ground at lap 37.

Bowyer's forward progress continued, resulting in him running as high as eighth at lap 49. Following the team's second and final scheduled pit stop at lap 65, Bowyer found himself running in 18th when a spin by Bobby Labonte brought out the caution flag at lap 75. Feeling like his chances to gain position would suffer greatly if he did not pit for fresh tires, Bowyer convinced Wilson to alter the team's strategy and pit one additional time. The gamble was risky, but it paid dividends for the No. 33 team as Bowyer climbed from 27th to eighth in the closing laps of the event.

Kasey Kahne picked up his first win of the 2009 season, beating Tony Stewart to the checkered flag by .748 seconds. Marcos Ambrose finished third, Jimmie Johnson fourth and Denny Hamlin fifth.

Bowyer's RCR teammates Casey Mears, Kevin Harvick and Jeff Burton finished 23rd, 29th and 34th, respectively.

The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series makes a cross-country run to New Hampshire Motor Speedway for next week's race.

Flag-to-flag coverage of the Lenox Industrial Tools 301 will take the green flag Sunday, June 28, beginning at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The race will be televised live on TNT and broadcast on the Performance Racing Network and Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying for the 17th points-paying race on the 2009 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series schedule will be telecast live on SPEED Friday, June 26 beginning at 3 p.m. EDT.