

Bowyer Rebounds to Finish Eighth in Fontana

Race/Date: Auto Club 500 – Feb. 21, 2010
Location: Auto Club Speedway – Fontana, Calif.
Start Position: Third
Finish Position: Eighth
Points Position: Second (gained two spots)

FONTANA, Calif. (February 22, 2010) – A never-quit attitude and a powerful No. 33 Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Chevrolet Impala propelled Clint Bowyer from being a lap down late in the Auto Club 500 at Auto Club Speedway to earning their second top-10 finish of the season.

Bowyer now sits second in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championship point standings, 19 markers behind Richard Childress Racing teammate Kevin Harvick.

The No. 33 team kicked off the weekend by posting the fifth-fastest time in Friday's lone practice session and, later that afternoon, improved on that speed by qualifying third for Sunday's 500 miler. On Saturday, Bowyer & Co. continued to show the strength of their Chevy by posting the ninth- and second-fastest speeds, respectively, in Saturday's duel practices.

Shortly after noon local time on Sunday, the green flag dropped to begin the 250-lap event at the two-mile Southern California oval. Bowyer was a mainstay in the top 10 for the opening 95 circuits, but faded to 15th after extra time was spent during a lap-94 pit stop while under caution. The Helping Hands crew had to remove a piece of plastic from the grill that caused the engine to overheat. Although Bowyer flexed his muscle to race his way back into the top five, debris on the grill would continue to plague the No. 33's efforts.

After Bowyer stayed out to lead two laps, a short rain shower forced NASCAR to display the yellow flag on lap 193. He was third when racing resumed nine laps later and the 30-year old driver again set his sights on the leader.

The excitement was short-lived as Bowyer radioed his crew that the engine was getting hot again. By lap 210, the temperature rose so fast that water was being pushed out of the engine. Instead of possibly causing damage by forging ahead, Bowyer brought his bright yellow and red Chevy down the pit lane. Another large piece of debris was removed from the grill and Bowyer returned to the track 24th, one lap down to the leaders.

The event's final caution flag waved on lap 225 and it could not have come at a better time for the No. 33 team. They earned their lap back, by way of the 'lucky dog' award for the being the first car one lap down to the leader. With the engine temperatures cooling, the two-time NSCS race winner gave one last tug on his seat belts for a 20-lap shootout to the finish as the green-flag waved on lap 230. Bowyer restarted 17th and methodically picked off nine positions to cross the finish line eighth.

The race was won by Jimmie Johnson, who was chased to the line by RCR teammates Harvick and Jeff Burton. Mark Martin and Joey Logano rounded out the top-five finishers.

Next weekend, NASCAR's top series remains out west and heads to the bright lights of Las Vegas.

Live coverage of the Shelby American begins Sunday, Feb. 28 at 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and will be televised on FOX. The race will also be broadcast on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius/XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying for the third of 36 points-paying races will be televised on SPEED Friday, Feb. 26 beginning at 6:30 p.m. EST.