

A Vegas Gamble and a Never-Quit Attitude Nets Another Top-10 Finish for Bowyer

Race/Date: Shelby American - Sunday, Feb. 28, 2010
Location: Las Vegas Motor Speedway
Starting Position: 14th
Finishing Position: Eighth
Points Position: Second (maintained position)

LAS VEGAS - Clint Bowyer and the No. 33 Cheerios/Hamburger Helper team scored their third consecutive top-10 finish of the 2010 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season with an eighth-place effort in Sunday's Shelby American at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

The Emporia, Kan., native remains second in the NSCS championship point standings, 47 markers behind Richard Childress Racing teammate Kevin Harvick.

The No. 33 Chevrolet rolled off the hauler strong, posting the seventh-fastest speed in the weekend's opening practice session on Friday. Later that afternoon, Bowyer toured the 1.5-mile desert oval to record the 14th-quickest time in time trials. The two-time NSCS race winner flexed his muscle on Saturday, posting the fifth-fastest speed in the opening practice session and then ended the final session at the top of the leader board.

Although cloudy skies and cool conditions plagued the previous two days at the Las Vegas oval, sunny skies greeted NASCAR's senior circuit as the green flag dropped to start Sunday's 400.5-miler.

Bowyer was a mainstay in the top 18 for the opening 100 laps, but his advancement in cracking the top 10 was hindered because of a lack of grip. Crew chief Shane Wilson called for multiple air pressure adjustments to get the red and yellow colored Impala balanced on two separate pit stops. Those adjustments were not enough to help Bowyer's cause, so, during a lap-109 pit stop while under caution, the team took the extra time necessary to remove spring rubber from the right rear.

When Racing resumed on lap 113, a long green-flag run ensued. Bowyer restarted 21st and the adjustments began to take their effect. On lap 125, the No. 33 Chevy was 13th and Bowyer was 11th just 22 laps later.

The Helping Hands crew jumped into action twice more as the race remained under green-flag conditions. Bowyer made visits to pit road on lap 163 and for the final time of the afternoon on lap 211. As the field cycled through each time, Bowyer held onto the 11th position.

The field was slowed for the event's seventh and final caution on lap 230. In typical Vegas fashion, Wilson decided to gamble and keep the 30-year-old driver out as the rest of the lead-lap competitors pitted. The gutsy call allowed the two-time Sprint Cup Series race winner to gain five bonus points for leading a lap and led Bowyer & Co. to take the checkered flag eighth.

Jimmie Johnson scored his second-consecutive victory as he was chased to the finish line by Harvick. Jeff Gordon, Mark Martin and Matt Kenseth rounded out the top-five finishers. Bowyer's other RCR stable mate, Jeff Burton, finished 11th and sits seventh in the points standings.

Next weekend, the NSCS heads back southeast as the circuit visits Atlanta Motor Speedway.

Live flag-to-flag coverage of the Kobalt Tools 500 will air live Sunday, March 7 at 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on FOX. The race will also be broadcast on the Performance Racing Network and Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying for the fourth points-paying event of the 2010 season will air live Friday, March 5 at 6 p.m. EST on SPEED.