



Talladega Superspeedway Recap – Coca-Cola 250 powered by Fred’s

Short Day at Longest Track for Matt Crafton; Early-Race Wreck Results in 31st-Place Finish at Talladega Superspeedway

TALLADEGA, Ala. (October 22, 2011) – Matt Crafton and the No. 88 Menards/CertainTeed team experienced an early disappointment in the Coca-Cola 250 at Talladega when superspeedway strategy backfired. While running faster than the leaders a safe distance behind the rest of the field, Crafton proved to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when a competitor blew a tire in front of him, resulting in a race-ending wreck which relegated him to a 31st-place finish.

After qualifying in the 12th position, Crafton and his ThorSport Racing teammates Johnny Sauter and Dakoda Armstrong headed to the back of the pack for the green flag in an effort to remain far away from the dicey racing at the front of the field. Crafton and Sauter joined into a two-truck tandem running 33rd and 34th on lap 4.

The ThorSport strategy worked to their advantage when the first yellow flag of the day waved for a multi-truck incident on lap 14, with Crafton and Sauter safely behind the six-truck carnage. While Sauter headed into the pits immediately when pit road opened, Crafton opted to stay on the track and lead a lap. Coming into the pits the following lap, Crafton took four tires and fuel, then made one more trip to the pits to top off on fuel before taking the green on lap 18.

Crafton and Sauter once again joined up in the back of the field, and the two were running faster lap times than the leaders in 25th and 26th when trouble struck the pair. Seemingly on their own at the back of the pack, a truck off the lead lap blew a tire in front of the teammates, forcing Crafton to lift as he quickly closed on the limping vehicle. With Sauter behind him and unable to see the truck Crafton was avoiding, he turned the No. 88 Menards/CertainTeed Chevy, sending Crafton into the wall and then sliding down the steeply-banked track. Coming to a stop on the apron, the heavily damaged truck was unable to continue and was retired from the race after a tow to the garage. Completing only 35 of the 94 scheduled laps, Crafton was ultimately scored in 31st when the checkered flag waved.

“The No. 16 blew a right-front tire in front of us, and when you’re coming up on someone at those speeds, you’re reacting so quickly,” said Crafton after the accident. “It’s all part of this tandem racing. I saw him blow the tire and my teammate behind me can’t really see at that point when he’s pushing me. I started to roll off the gas just a little bit and he turned me around. There was nothing I could do, I was just along for the ride. It’s a shame because this Menards/CertainTeed Chevy was really good. We fell to the back of the pack and we were actually running faster than the leaders at that point. We were just trying to be around at the end of the race it just didn’t work out. ”

Crafton lost two spots in the driver’s point race, now sitting in eighth place, 82 points behind the championship leader and 40 points behind fifth place. The NASCAR Camping World Truck Series heads to Martinsville Speedway next Saturday, October 29th for a 2:00 p.m. start to the Kroger 200.

Race Recap:

Date: October 22, 2011

Track: Talladega Superspeedway

Race: 22 of 25

Started: 12th

Finished: 31st

Driver’s Point Standings: 8th (-82)

Up Next On The Truck Series Schedule:

Date: October 29, 2011

Track: Martinsville Speedway

Event Name: Kroger 200

Broadcast: SPEED at 2:00 p.m.

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