



RCR Post Race Report -- Bristol

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series

RACE: Jeff Byrd 500

TRACK: Bristol Motor Speedway

DATE: March 20, 2011

Race Highlights:

- RCR teammates finished fifth (Paul Menard), sixth (Kevin Harvick), 20th (Jeff Burton) and 35th (Clint Bowyer).
- Menard recorded his best start (fourth) and finish (fifth) at Bristol Speedway and led his first laps around the 0.533-mile speedway (35).
- Menard ranks fifth in the Sprint Cup Series point standings, his highest placement in his Sprint Cup Series career.
- Harvick's sixth-place effort advanced him five spots, to 15th, in the point standings where he now sits just 13 points outside the top 10.
- Burton, the 2008 Food City 500 race winner, has finished inside the top 20 in the last five races at Bristol Motor Speedway.
- Kyle Busch scored the win and was chased to the line by Carl Edwards, Jimmie Johnson, Matt Kenseth and Paul Menard.
- The next Sprint Cup Series race is the Auto Club 400 at Auto Club Speedway on Sunday, March 27, televised live on Fox and broadcast live on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius XM Satellite Radio beginning at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.



Top-Five Finish at Bristol for Paul Menard and the No. 27 CertainTeed/Menards Team

Paul Menard started the No. 27 CertainTeed/Menards Chevrolet from the second row in Sunday's Jeff Byrd 500 after recording the fourth-quickest lap in Friday's NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying session at Bristol Motor Speedway. It took less than a lap for him to move into the second position and 18 laps to overtake the lead. He remained the frontrunner for 35 laps until making a pit stop on lap 52 when the field was slowed for a NASCAR-mandated competition caution. The CertainTeed/Menards crew executed a four-tire pit stop with fuel while some teams opted for two tires, fuel only, or to remain on the race track. Menard restarted from the 12th position, but quickly climbed back inside of the top 10, where he remained throughout most of the afternoon. Menard reported that his Impala was experiencing a tight-center condition that was hurting his drive off of the corners. The Slugger Labbe-led team made minor adjustments with each pit stop in an effort to improve the car's handling and adjust to the track's changing conditions. Menard fought hard to maintain his track position and, with the help of his over-the-wall crew, gained three additional spots on pit road while under caution at lap 428. Restarting eighth on lap 436, Menard battled his way into the top five, holding off challengers throughout a series of cautions and restarts, to finish fifth in the 500-lap event. Menard recorded his best finish to date at Bristol Motor Speedway and climbed to the fifth position in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver championship point standings.

Start - 4th

Finish - 5th

Laps Led - 35

Points - 5th

PAUL MENARD QUOTE:

"The CertainTeed/Menards Chevrolet was fast all weekend. Slugger (Labbe, crew chief) and the No. 27 guys did a great job getting it adjusted with the new tires. The crew had some really strong pit stops towards the end of the race and gained us some spots on pit road. I am very proud of all these guys and the start we've had to our season. What's cool is that we've been to four very different race tracks and we've had strong runs at all of them. I think this is a testament to Slugger and everyone at RCR. There is a lot of experience and talent up there. Slugger has built a hell of a race team and we are just having a lot of fun right now."

**Harvick, No. 29 Team Earn a Solid Sixth-Place Showing in Thunder Valley**

After a late-race accident that took them out of contention for the win, Kevin Harvick and the No. 29 Budweiser Chevrolet team rallied back to score a sixth-place finish in Sunday's Jeff Byrd 500 at Bristol Motor Speedway. Harvick started Sunday's race from the 15th position and fell back several spots before the first caution at lap 28. He brought the No. 29 Budweiser Chevrolet to the attention of his pit crew for new tires and adjustments to help the car's loose-handling condition. On the subsequent caution at lap 50, the team opted for only fuel and a chassis adjustment, and Harvick restarted in the 11th position on lap 56. The No. 29 Budweiser Chevrolet was solidly inside the top five in less than 10 laps. Harvick continued to gain positions and took the lead at lap 155. Harvick remained first until he got hung up in lapped traffic and the No. 48 car got by at lap 192. At the halfway point, the No. 29 Budweiser Chevrolet was running in the third position and remained inside the top six as Harvick radioed to the crew that the car was still loose in the middle of the corner. On the subsequent trip to pit road, crew chief Gil Martin called for a four-tire stop with air pressure adjustments to help the car's handling. While running in the top five, contact from the No. 5 car sent Harvick for a spin at lap 437. The No. 29 Chevrolet sustained damage to the left-rear quarter panel and the team pitted twice under caution to make repairs and change tires. Harvick restarted at the back of the field in 16th position at lap 444. A caution just six laps later allowed him to line up with the rest of the lead-lap cars in the 13th position when the green flag waved at lap 456. Harvick worked his way into the top 10 by lap 471. In the remaining laps, he raced his way up to seventh and passed the No. 22 car coming to the checkered flag to finish sixth.

Start - 15th

Finish - 6th

Laps Led - 37

Points - 15th

KEVIN HARVICK QUOTE:

"Well, I just want to thank all of my guys. You know when we were sitting there running third and fifth, we were really just riding. I just wanted to make sure that we had a race car left and the No. 4 got a little tight and the No. 5 ran over us again. Luckily, we didn't hit anything and they got the fenders off the tires and our Budweiser Chevrolet was really, really fast today, especially the last run there. I was able to maneuver and pass cars and do what I needed to do. We've had top-five cars every week and we don't really have a lot to show for it. We came back and got a good sixth-place finish today. These guys are doing a great job and I really think it shows the maturity of the race team and the things that we go through and the way we've been able to come back."



Never-Give-Up Attitudes Result in Top-20 Finish for Burton, Cat Racing Team in Bristol

A loose wheel in the early stages of Sunday's Jeff Byrd 500 at Bristol Motor Speedway, coupled with low battery power on the No. 31 Caterpillar Chevrolet, left Jeff Burton and the Todd Berrier-led team deep in the field, but their never-give-up attitudes rose to the top, and the team recovered nicely by nursing their machine home to a 20th-place result. After starting the 500-lap showdown in the 17th position, the power in the South Boston, Va., native's black and yellow machine shut off just 28 laps in. NASCAR displayed the caution when Burton's problems triggered a chain reaction behind him as competitors checked up and sought different avenues. The veteran driver manually switched ignition boxes inside his No. 31 Chevrolet before returning to competition nine laps later. Soon after, on lap 75, the veteran driver informed the team of a loose wheel and immediately made an unscheduled green-flag pit stop for four fresh tires, placing the Cat Racing team two laps down to the leader and in 36th position. Berrier and Company spent the remaining 400-plus laps, including eight caution periods, focused on improving their position while keeping an eye on the low voltage that was fluctuating on the backup battery. After it was all said and done, they advanced 16 spots before the checkered flag waved. Although their performance was unexpected, the No. 31 team's optimism and their keep-fighting mindset propelled them three spots in the overall championship point standings, to 29th, and are a mere 15 markers in arrears to cracking the top 20.

Start - 17th

Finish - 20th

Laps Led - 0

Points - 29th

JEFF BURTON QUOTE:

"These last few races have been really disappointing because of different situations that we ended up finding ourselves in. The Caterpillar Chevrolet has been real competitive but it's been wrong place, wrong time circumstances or things out of our control. Today, the power went out in the beginning of the race that we had to nurse and a loose wheel put us down a couple of laps. But, Todd (Berrier, crew chief) kept the team in check and positive and we turned a day that could've been a lot worse into a top 20."



Blown Engine for No. 33 Team Results in 35th-Place Finish at Bristol

After being involved in a late-race accident, Clint Bowyer and the No. 33 BB&T Chevrolet team suffered a blown engine, resulting in a 35th-place finish in the Jeff Byrd 500 at Bristol Motor Speedway. Rolling off the starting grid on the inside of row 14, Bowyer found himself battling a loose-handling race car from the beginning of the 500-lap event. He worked his way through the 43-car field, passing cars on track while cautions and driver feedback provided the Shane Wilson-led "Helping Hands" pit crew opportunities to make tire pressure and chassis adjustments on the No. 33 Chevrolet. After falling one lap down to the leaders while running in the 19th position, Bowyer was collected in a multi-car accident on lap 436, which led to significant right-front fender damage to the car. After repairs were made on pit road, Bowyer was able to return to the track without losing any track position. However, a significant drop in water temperature meant engine woes were imminent and as the green flag waved on lap 456, it took only one lap before the engine expired on the backstretch of the "World's Fastest Half-Mile", relegating the Emporia, Kan., native to a disappointing 35th-place finish.

Start - 27th

Finish - 35th

Laps Led - 0

Points - 24th

CLINT BOWYER QUOTE:

"It was a tough weekend for the No. 33 BB&T team because we had high hopes after our success last August. We need to put this behind us and turn our attention to California where we had a lot of success last season."