

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – Las Vegas

Date: Feb. 28, 2010
Event: Shelby American (Race 3 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Location: Las Vegas Motor Speedway (1.5-Mile Tri-Oval)
Winner: Jimmie Johnson of Hendrick Motorsports
JGR Finish: Joey Logano (Started 6th, Finished 6th / Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)
Kyle Busch (Started 5th, Finished 15th / Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)
Denny Hamlin (Started 27th, Finished 19th / Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)

It often pays to have luck on your side when in Las Vegas but that was not the case for Joe Gibbs Racing yesterday during the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Shelby American race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

While luck might not have been evident however, JGR's hard work was, with Joey Logano earning an impressive sixth-place finish and Kyle Busch and Denny Hamlin battling adversity to claim 15th and 19th respectively.

For the second straight week it was Joey Logano leading JGR with another top-10 finish in the No. 20 Home Depot Toyota. Logano qualified sixth, but spent much of the first half of the race running just outside the top 10 as crew chief Greg Zipadelli and the Home Depot team made adjustments to improve the handling on his No. 20 Camry. Logano would race his way into the top-10 again around lap 200 and would go on to gain several more positions over the closing laps. Logano just missed earning his second consecutive fifth-place finish as he nearly clipped Matt Kenseth at the finish line, but was forced to settle for an impressive sixth-place effort. Just three races into the 2010 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series campaign, Logano now sits eighth in the point standings, just 93 points behind the current leader.

Kyle Busch was hoping to repeat his win from one-year ago in the No. 18 M&Ms Toyota at Las Vegas Motor Speedway yesterday and for much of the race it appeared he would have that opportunity. Busch started from the fifth position and stayed inside the top-ten and even the top-five for much of the day. Unfortunately for Busch and the M&Ms team as he made his way onto pit road for what he hoped would be his final stop on lap 216, NASCAR deemed the No. 18 Camry was too fast and ruled a pass-through penalty. As he made his way through pit road to serve the penalty he would go down a lap to the leaders and was forced to restart in 17th position on lap 225. Busch would eventually get back on the lead lap and pick up a couple additional spots over the race's final laps to earn a 15th-place finish.

Denny Hamlin and the FedEx crew fought all day to find the proper handle on his No. 11 FedEx Ground Toyota, but never appeared able to find the proper balance. Hamlin started the day in 27th position and raced his way forward to just outside the top-20 as he battled a loose handling race car. Crew chief Mike Ford and the FedEx crew made several big adjustments, but Hamlin continued to battle the No. 11 Camry through the entry and exit of each turn. He would go a lap down, but made his way back onto the lead lap and raced his way into the top twenty to earn a 19th-place finish.

Jimmie Johnson of Hendrick Motorsports captured the victory for the second consecutive week. Kevin Harvick was second, followed by Jeff Gordon third, Mark Martin fourth, and Matt Kenseth fifth. There were seven cautions for 29 laps and 18 lead changes among nine different drivers.

Next week the NASCAR Sprint Cup series returns to the east coast for the Kobalt Tools 500 from Atlanta Motor Speedway on Sunday, March 7. The race begins at 1 PM ET with live, high-definition coverage provided by FOX beginning with its pre-race show at Noon. The race will also be broadcast live on SIRIUS Satellite Radio Channel 128.