

Kevin Harvick's Win Adds another Chapter to Childress Legacy at Daytona

Race/Date: Coke Zero 400 Powered by Coca-Cola/July 3, 2010
Location: Daytona International Speedway – Daytona Beach, Fla.
Start Position: **First**
Finish Position: **First**
Points Position: **First** (Maintained position)

There were many storylines heading into Saturday's running of the Coke Zero 400 Powered by Coca-Cola at Daytona International Speedway.

Could the racing surface at the storied 2.5-mile facility hold up one more time before the installation of a new surface?

Would the point leader, Kevin Harvick, win another race prior to the Chase cutoff?

Would the racing mirror the action at Talladega, with a record number of leaders and lead changes?

Could there be one more chapter added to Richard Childress Racing's history at Daytona, capping an emotional weekend after the No. 3 visited Victory Lane on Friday night, with Dale Earnhardt, Jr. at the wheel, in the Nationwide Series event?

Harvick answered each of those questions emphatically by leading the most laps and scoring his second win of the season and his 13th career NASCAR Sprint Cup Series victory. The race saw an event record of 18 leaders, with a total number of 47 lead changes. Additionally, the victory was RCR's 28th Daytona win.

The weekend got off to an inauspicious start with qualifying being washed out for the 18th race of the season. The lineup was set using the current 2010 standings, and the pole was awarded to the Shell-Pennzoil No. 29 team.

Before a crowd of 115,000, Harvick took the green flag and led the other 42 competitors around the high banks of Daytona in two-by-two formation. The action was slowed on lap 15 when NASCAR displayed a competition caution in order for the team's to check their respective tire wear. Harvick took the caution flag in fifth, and reported to his crew chief, Gil Martin, that his car was loose off the corners. Martin and company filled their Chevrolet full of fuel and changed right-side tires only. Harvick left the pits as the leader.

The race resumed on lap 19, and the red and yellow machine gradually lost grip over the course of the next run. Harvick faded to 15th, but he would not stay there for long.

Once the team had the opportunity to pit again, they put on four tires and added fuel, a routine that would become the norm for the remainder of the evening.

Armed with fresh tires, Harvick went back to work and carved his way back to the front by lap 130. With Harvick and his RCR teammates, Clint Bowyer and Jeff Burton, leading the field, a multi-car accident involving 19 racers on lap 149 slowed the action.

The teams had just a handful of laps on their tires, but Martin took the opportunity to bring Harvick back down pit road to take on four fresh tires and a splash of fuel. Harvick left pit road in fourth.

Harvick lined up behind Bowyer, and the two cars charged ahead of the field and appeared to have a one-two finish in the bag, when a caution flag came out for an accident in turn four, with Bowyer just shy of taking the white flag.

When the race resumed, Bowyer chose the outside line directly in front of Jeff Gordon, while Harvick lined up on the inside row with Kasey Kahne in his mirror. As the cars raced toward turn one, Gordon made it three wide on the RCR duo. The move allowed Harvick to take the lead off turn two, and the Bakersfield, Calif., driver never looked back and raced his way to the victory. Kahne finished second, while Gordon, Earnhardt, Jr. and Burton rounded out the top five. Bowyer cut a tire on the last lap and finished 17th.

With the victory, Harvick extended his lead in the NSCS standings to 212 points over Gordon. Additionally, Harvick is 553 markers forward of the 13th-place driver, with just eight races remaining until the Chase to Sprint Cup field gets set.

Next week, NASCAR takes its premier series to Chicagoland Speedway for its 19th outing on the 2010 schedule. Live coverage of the LifeLock 400 will be televised on TNT Saturday, July 10, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time and will also broadcast worldwide on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying will be televised on SPEED Friday, July 9, beginning at 6 p.m. EDT.

KEVIN HARVICK QUOTE:

“This has been a great place for us. Daytona has been one of those magical places for us since we started coming here. I just have to thank everybody from Shell-Pennzoil, Reese’s, Jimmy Johns, SKF, Champion, Realtree, and Coca-Cola. We are drinking a lot of Coke Zero, and this is their race. At the end, I wanted to be behind Clint and be able to push him, because it was working pretty well for us. Then that caution came out, and we had to split up because of the double-file restarts. But, I helped him as much as I could and we got separated. Then on that final restart, the No. 24 split the No. 33 and that was it. I don’t care so much about the trophy; I just want some of the pavement from the start-finish line out there. This is pretty cool.”

RICHARD CHILDRESS QUOTE:

“I’m just proud of everybody at RCR for all the hard work they did to get these cars going. ECR engines were running great and I am very proud of them. I am proud of Kevin. He is becoming one of these guys that have a knack for winning the restrictor-plate races. He’s kind of like Dale Earnhardt, Sr. You always knew he was going to be a factor in it. To have all three RCR cars up there leading the race, racing with each other, it was really cool to watch.”

GIL MARTIN QUOTE:

“Well, obviously, we’re in a fortunate position to be where we are right now in the points lead. And, as far as rolling the dice, we’re going to try to do that as much as possible because we need to get to victory lane as much as we can. That’s what Richard pays us to do. We have to get there. But, at the same token, we have to get there by being smart and make sure that we’re not only consistent, but that we have some speed. We are going to be in a position to

have a fleet of cars that's ready to go to the Chase, not one that we're just barely able to get there. That's what we're looking forward to more than anything."