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'Five-Time' Is Now a 'Three-Time'

Johnson Scores Third Career All-Star Race Victory

Date: May 19, 2012
Event: NASCAR Sprint All-Star Race (non-points event)
Series: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Location: Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)
Start/Finish: 6th/1st (Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)
Winner: Jimmie Johnson of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Hendrick Motorsports Finish: Jimmie Johnson (Started 6th, Finished 1st/Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)
Dale Earnhardt Jr. (Started 21st, Finished 5th/Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)
Kasey Kahne (Started 20th, Finished 9th/Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)
Jeff Gordon (Started 8th, Finished 13th/Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)

Add "Three-Time" to Jimmie Johnson's list of accomplishments. Five-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Johnson became a three-time winner of the NASCAR Sprint All-Star Race Saturday night at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway, tying Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt for most wins in the annual non-points event. Johnson's prior wins in the All-Star Race came in the 2003 and 2006 editions of the annual event.

"We had a strategy," said Johnson, who came into this weekend's race fresh off a win last weekend at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway. "We weren't sure we could get there starting sixth. But this racecar was so amazing. Man, I don't want this week to end."

Johnson started the night right by winning the first segment, which teed up his dominant performance in the final 10-lap dash for the \$1 million prize. After starting from sixth place, Johnson took the lead on lap 15 in the No. 48 Lowe's Patriotic Chevrolet and led the final six laps of segment one. Winning segment one earned Johnson the benefit of being the first car to hit pit road during the mandatory stop before the final 10-lap segment.

Since Johnson's position was secured for the final trip to pit road, all he needed to do was protect his car during the next three 20-lap segments. So Johnson dropped to the rear of the field and watched the action unfold in front of him for the next 60 laps.

Johnson took over the top spot as the field prepared to hit pit road for the final time. It was a quick stop-and-go, and Johnson barely edged Matt Kenseth as the first driver to leave pit road. Johnson restarted the race in first place and never looked back, cruising to his third career All-Star Race win and his ninth overall Sprint Cup Series victory at Charlotte.

Brad Keselowski finished .841 of a second behind Johnson in the runner-up spot, while Kenseth, Kyle Busch and Dale Earnhardt Jr. rounded out the top-five. Kevin Harvick, Marcos Ambrose, Kurt Busch, Kasey Kahne and Newman comprised the remainder of the top-10.

The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series returns to point-paying racing on Sunday, May 27 with the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte. The longest race on the Sprint Cup schedule gets underway at 6 p.m. EDT, with live coverage provided by FOX beginning at 5:30 p.m.

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