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Busch Closes the Deal, Wins at Watkins Glen *M&M's Driver Claims Third Victory of 2013 Season*

Date: Aug. 11, 2013
Event: 355k at The Glen (Round 22 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Location: Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International (2.45-mile, 11-turn road course)
Start/Finish: 5th/1st (Running, completed 90 of 90 laps)
Point Standing: 5th (693 points, 115 out of first, 70 ahead of 11th)
Winner: Kyle Busch of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Redemption.

After two years of coming up just short of victory at the 2.45-mile, 11-turn road course, Kyle Busch finally had things go his way at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International. This time, Busch closed the deal and claimed victory in the 355k at The Glen NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race Sunday to earn his second career victory at the iconic track and his third win of the 2013 season.

“When it’s your day, it’s your day, and today was ours,” Busch said. “This Toyota Camry today, it deserved to be in victory lane the last couple years here, so this was ‘Rowdy’s’ revenge. I’m glad it’s back in victory lane today.

“My car wasn’t turning as good as it needed to on four tires, so I was really having to muscle it and try to get it around here as best as I could. But man, can’t say enough about M&M’s, everybody from M&M’s – all our M&M’s associates across the world, we appreciate your support. It’s awesome to be back in victory lane with your colors and thanks Interstate Batteries, Norm Miller (chairman of Interstate Batteries).

“This Toyota Camry was awesome today – just fun to drive. Not quite as good as it needed to be – I think we could make it better. I’m always a perfectionist, so I always want to be better. Can’t say enough about Sprint – we appreciate them – Monster Energy and the fans, too – the fans on TV, the fans here today. It was a great turnout and great job by Watkins Glen International.”

For Busch, the key to the victory was blending the right pit strategy with a good racecar and smart driving throughout the 90-lap race.

Busch, driver of the No. 18 M&M’s Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR), started fifth. He moved into second place by lap 23, chasing leader Marcos Ambrose.

At lap 29, Busch brought his No. 18 Camry to the attention of his pit crew for four tires and fuel, along with a wedge adjustment to help tighten his loose-handling racecar on the right-hand turns.

Busch made his final pit stop of the day on lap 59, and the timing couldn’t have been better. The caution flag waved just two laps later, which handed the lead to Busch since he had pitted before the caution.

Despite a flurry of caution flags and a series of hectic restarts in the closing laps, Busch never looked back and claimed the 27th Sprint Cup win of his career. He led the last 29 laps of the race, resisting fierce pressure from Brad Keselowski on the final lap.

“That (caution) was a game-changer right there,” Busch said. “Marcos had a fast race car, and I felt like it was going to be a race between whoever he or I could get out front. Fortunately, we did. He got back in traffic and then he got bottled up and then he eventually got wrecked there, but it’s just a day that you’ve got to preserve and you’ve got to take what comes to you, and it’s never over until it’s over. I could have blown turn six or blown turn seven and Brad could have had it, but I did what I needed to do to protect my spot and bring this M&M’s Camry here to the winner’s circle.”

Busch’s JGR teammates – Denny Hamlin in the No. 11 Toyota Camry and Matt Kenseth in the No. 20 Toyota Camry – finished 19th and 23rd, respectively.

Keselowski finished .486 seconds behind Busch in the runner-up spot, while Martin Truex Jr., Carl Edwards and Juan Pablo Montoya rounded out the top-five. Clint Bowyer, Joey Logano, Jimmie Johnson, Kurt Busch and AJ Allmendinger comprised the remainder of the top-10.

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There were eight caution periods for 21 laps, with nine drivers failing to finish the 90-lap race.

With round 22 of 36 complete, Busch leads the JGR trio in the championship point standings. He gained one position to fifth with 693 points, 115 behind series leader Johnson and 70 ahead of 11th-place Kurt Busch. Kenseth remained in seventh with 659 points, 149 out of first and 36 ahead of 11th-place Busch. Hamlin maintained his 25th-place spot with 414 points, 394 out of first and 211 behind 10th-place Truex.

Four races remain before the 12-driver, 10-race Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup begins Sept. 15 at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Ill. Only the top-10 in points are locked into the Chase. Positions 11 and 12 in the Chase are wild cards, awarded to the two drivers between 11th and 20th in points with the most wins. If multiple drivers have the same number of wins, a driver's point standing serves as the tiebreaker.

The next event on the Sprint Cup schedule is the Pure Michigan 400 on Sunday, Aug. 18 at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. The race starts at 1 p.m. EDT, with live coverage provided by ESPN beginning with its pre-race show at noon.

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