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CRAFTON CHARGES TO TOP-10 FINISH AT TALLADEGA

Matt Crafton overcame a flat-tire that dropped him a lap down early in the race and charged to a top-ten finish in the Mountain Dew 250 at Talladega Superspeedway on Saturday.

Crafton suffered a flat tire on lap twenty-seven and fell a lap behind the race leaders, but then displayed the tenacity for which his team is known. Though still a lap down, Crafton kept the pressure on and his No. 88 Menards/Tide Chevrolet in front of the pack for several laps during the midpoint of the race. Crafton got back on the lead lap when a caution flag flew a bit later, and rallied to a spot on the fringe of the top-ten with ten laps to go. He hooked-up on the outside line with ThorSport Racing teammate Johnny Sauter, and pushed toward a spot near the front of the pack.

With a handful of laps left in the race, Crafton held a spot in the top-five and was positioned for a battle to the wire. Via the aid of a patented Talladega drafting push, Crafton took the lead on the backstretch during the final lap and appeared headed for pulse-pounding victory. Crafton lost his drafting help on the straightaway, however, and settled for a tenth-place finish. It was his first top-ten finish in four career starts at Talladega.

“It was a typical wild, mentally-draining day at Talladega,” Crafton said. “We were right there at the end, with as good a shot to win the race as anybody, but just lost our pusher and came up a little bit short. That’s the way Talladega works; you just never know. But we learned an awful lot, and I’m proud that we were able to battle back after the flat tire and finish in the top-ten. The trucks put on a heck of a good show for the fans at Talladega again, no doubt. All in all, considering how things unfolded out there today, we can’t be too disappointed with our finish. We’ll take it and be ready at Texas next week.”

Crafton remains in second place in the NCWTS standings with three races remaining this season.