

Robby Gordon Charlotte Recap

Charlotte, N.C. (October 19, 2009) – Coming off a third-place finish in May at Charlotte Motor Speedway, Robby Gordon and the No. 7 Freightliner team had high hopes for the NASCAR Banking 500 on Saturday night.

The No. 7 Toyota Camry proved yet again to be fast; Gordon qualified 19th for Saturday's 334-lap event. Throughout the weekend, he practiced in the top twenty and was fourth quick in the final practice session. Following that session, the team put a packer in the left front shock, which they believed would help the handling throughout the race. This decision would eventually plague the team on Saturday evening.

When the green flag fell, the No. 7 Freightliner Camry was just slightly loose, but Gordon was still pleased with the car. Several early cautions prevented the team from understanding how Gordon's Camry would handle on the long runs; Gordon strategically stayed on track until the team could determine how the handling on the No. 7 would dial in. The Freightliner crew hoped that as the race progressed, Gordon's Camry would tighten and optimize the handling. Unfortunately, the packer made the car too loose for Gordon's comfort throughout the early laps of the race.

The team continued to make various adjustments throughout the night to aid the handling on the No. 7, but Gordon continued to lack the grip he needed to travel around the turns at the 1.5-mile oval. The crew struggled throughout the race with a broken track bar which limited the adjustments available to Gordon's Camry. Even though the handling wasn't optimal on the No. 7, Gordon was the recipient of the free pass on Lap 119 and continued to pace himself with the leaders.

On Lap 243, the Freightliner crew called Gordon down pit road for his second green-flag stop of the evening. The team serviced the car with a series of adjustments hoping to fix Gordon's entry into the turns. Unfortunately, following the stop NASCAR's scoring system clocked Gordon leaving pit road at a speed faster than the maximum allowed, and Gordon was called back down pit road to serve his penalty. The No. 7 lost valuable time as Gordon travelled down pit road for a second time serving his drive-thru penalty before returning to the track. By the time Gordon returned to speed and the green-flag stops cycled through the field, Gordon was scored in the 26th position, two-laps behind the leader.

Gordon's last bit of bad luck came during the Lap 312 caution period when the Freightliner Trucks Camry's grill was covered in grass and other debris as Gordon worked to avoid trouble on the track. Gordon searched for ways to remove the debris from the grill of his car in order to reduce the rising engine temperatures. Several unsuccessful attempts sent him down pit road before the restart to avoid overheating the engine. The stop placed Gordon back in the 30th position without the track position needed to catch his competitors and less than 20 laps remaining in the race.

When the checkered flag fell, Gordon was scored in the 30th position.

"We had a really great car this weekend," said Gordon. "It's always frustrating when you know you have a car capable of finishing good, but you can't seem to catch a break or get the track position to run up front. We were running lap times

comparable to the leaders, which makes this even more frustrating but we could never work our way up to the front. I ultimately sealed our fate for the day when I got caught speeding on pit road. Texas is a very similar track and that's coming up in just a few weeks. Hopefully, we'll be able to put together our experience from this weekend and the knowledge that we gained here to have a strong run there."

Next weekend, the Sprint Cup Series travels to the paperclip-shaped Martinsville Speedway. Tempers have been known to flair over the years at the half-mile oval and the Tums Fast Relief 500 is sure to be no exception. ABC will carry a live television broadcast of the event beginning at 1:00 p.m. EST on Sunday, October 25. MRN and Sirius Satellite Radio will have radio coverage of the race beginning at 12:15 p.m. EST. Qualifying for the 500-mile event will be broadcast on ESPN2 at 3:10 p.m. EST on Friday, October 23.