



RACE RECAP:

Las Vegas Motor Speedway

Sam's Town 300

Saturday, February 27, 2010

Paul Menard – No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion

PAUL MENARD AND NO. 98 RICHMOND/MENARDS FORD FUSION TEAM FINISH EIGHTH IN SAM'S TOWN 300

Menard Rallies Back From Speeding Penalty to Capture Second Top-10 Finish of 2010

Paul Menard and the No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion team made their way to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway this weekend for the Sam's Town 300. After posting the fastest time during Friday's first practice session and securing a solid sixth-place starting position for Saturday's race, Menard and company were optimistic for a strong finish. Throughout the 200-lap event, stalled six times for cautions, Menard avoided trouble and kept the No. 98 inside the top 15 for 144 laps. Though he reported that his Ford was handling "too tight" for much of the race, Menard was able to recover from a pit road speeding penalty that put him a lap down to finish in eighth place – his second top-10 finish of 2010.

Rain delayed the start of the third NASCAR Nationwide Series race of the 2010 season by one hour and 30 minutes. Once the weather cleared and the track was dried, pole winner, Brad Keselowski led the 43-car field to the green flag. Menard rolled off sixth, but by the first caution on lap five had fallen back to seventh place and reported that his Ford was "really tight on exit." In spite of the driver's comments, crew chief Matt Puccia directed Menard not pit during this caution period.

Over the next several laps Menard fell back to 12th position and continued to battle with a tight handling No. 98. The field began making green flag pit stops around lap 58 and the Menards team followed suit. After the No. 98 was serviced with four tires, fuel and a track bar adjustment for the handling issues, Menard exited pit road to rejoin the race. However in his haste entering pit road, Menard was cited for speeding and forced to serve a pass through penalty. After the penalty was served, Menard was scored in 30th position, one lap down to the leader on lap 68.

Down but not out, Menard raced hard to put the No. 98 in contention for the "Lucky Dog" award and on lap 104 when caution was thrown due to rain, Menard gained his lap back. Despite the comeback, Menard continued to report a tight handling racecar. On the lap 106 pit stop, Puccia called for aggressive adjustments in hopes of remedying the handling problems reported by Menard. After the No. 98 team removed a spring rubber, made a track bar adjustment, bolted on four tires and filled the Menards Ford with fuel, Menard exited pit road in 19th place. The race restarted on lap 108 and Menard was back on the lead lap.

Lap by lap Menard made his way through traffic, avoiding a couple of close calls en route to a top-10 running position. On the race's final restart with 25 laps remaining, Menard was scored in 10th position. When the checkers waved on lap 200, the No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion crossed the finish line in eighth place.

"I'm pleased with how the day turned out for us," said Menard. "Obviously I would prefer a top five, but considering we were a lap down at one point in the race, eighth place isn't bad at all. Our car was just really tight the whole race. Matt (Puccia) and the guys made a lot of good adjustments that seemed to help, but we needed just a little more. All in all a good day for the Menards team."

Kevin Harvick was dominant the entire race and held off the rain, and the rest of the field, for his first Nationwide Series victory of 2010. Denny Hamlin was second, followed by Carl Edwards. Pole winner, Keselowski was fourth, Brian Vickers, fifth; Trevor Bayne, Justin Allgaier, Menard, Greg Biffle and Steve Wallace completed the top 10.

Menard and the No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion team will enjoy the next two weekends off, but will return to racing action at the famed Bristol Motor Speedway on March 20 for the Scott's Turf Builder 300. ABC television and PRN radio affiliates will carry the live race broadcast beginning at 2:30 p.m. (EST).

UPCOMING RACE:

Bristol Motor Speedway – Scott's Turf Builder 300
Saturday, March 20, 2010
2:30 p.m. (EST) ABC television and PRN radio

MENARD'S LAS VEGAS STATS:

Start: Sixth
Finish: Eighth
Laps: 200/200
Points: 142
Status: Running
Fastest Laps: 0
Laps in top 15: 144

2010 CUMULATIVE STATS:

Races: 3 of 35
Points: 398
Rank: Ninth (-107)
Top fives: 0
Top 10s: 2
Starts: 3
Poles: 0