



**Subway Fresh Fit 500 Race Report
NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
No. 43 Cheerios/Betty Crocker Dodge
April 12, 2008
1-mile Phoenix (Ariz.) International Raceway**

RACE RESULTS:

1. Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet
2. Clint Bowyer, Chevrolet
3. Denny Hamlin, Toyota
4. Carl Edwards, Ford
5. Mark Martin, Chevrolet
- 12. Bobby Labonte, Cheerios/Betty Crocker Dodge**

Jimmie Johnson picked up his second consecutive victory at the Phoenix (Ariz.) International Raceway (PIR) when he took the checkered flag in Saturday night's Subway Fresh Fit 500. In the process, Johnson gave Hendrick Motorsports their first NASCAR Sprint Cup victory of 2008.

The event came down to a wild finish that was predicated by fuel mileage. It looked to be a race between Dale Earnhardt Jr. and his former No. 8 team, driven by veteran Mark Martin. However, both of those cars had to stop for fuel and Johnson did not.

Bobby Labonte and the No. 43 Cheerios/Betty Crocker Dodge team also used great fuel mileage to come home 12th in the race. Labonte started the race from the 34th position. He looked to have a strong car as he made quick work of the competitors in front of him. The hot Arizona sun was still blazing down by the drop of the green flag. It was not long before Labonte radioed to crew chief Jeff Meendering that he needed more grip when coming off the aging corners at PIR.

Many races this year have featured at least one long green flag run. Saturday was no different. After a lap 46 restart, the field was still under the green flag when Labonte came down pit road for service on lap 112. In a stroke of misfortune, the caution flag flew on lap 113 while Labonte was still on pit road. This nearly caught the No. 43 team a lap down. Labonte had to restart the race in front of the leaders, the tail end of the lead lap. The leader made his way around, but Labonte maintained his position as the "Lucky Dog" until the next caution. That caution came on lap 133 and he was back on the lead lap.

It was around this time that the No. 43 Dodge began to develop a miss in the motor. After several stops to evaluate, the culprit was found. A spark plug wire had burned through. Labonte battled with only seven of the eight cylinders in his motor firing until another caution period where the team could go under the hood and fix the problem. On lap 199 the caution came out, giving motor tuner Tommy Chandler time to replace the spark plug wire. All of this took place without Labonte losing a lap to the competition. After a lap 234 restart, the rest of the race would go green. This resulted in many teams taking fuel mileage gambles. Meendering's gamble resulted in Labonte coming home as the highest-finishing driver in the Dodge Motorsports camp. As a result, Labonte moved up three spots to 18th in the NASCAR Sprint Cup point's standings.

"That was a pretty grueling race," said Labonte. "It was pretty warm out there for awhile and the cars were just a handful tonight. The asphalt is worn out and it seems like you never have enough grip. Once again, my team did a great job for me. They repaired the plug wire without going a lap down. Jeff made a great call to stay out on fuel. That's a good finish for us."

The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series will visit the Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway in two weeks. The race will be broadcast on FOX, the Motor Racing Network (MRN) and Sirius Satellite Radio channel 128.