



Samsung 500 Race Report
NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
No. 43 Cheerios Racing/Sam's Club Dodge
April 6, 2008
1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway

RACE RESULTS:

1. Carl Edwards, Ford
2. Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet
3. Kyle Busch, Toyota
4. Ryan Newman, Dodge
5. Denny Hamlin, Toyota

20. Bobby Labonte, Cheerios Racing/Sam's Club Dodge

Carl Edwards continued his dominance of the downforce tracks as he picked up his third such victory of 2008 in Sunday's Samsung 500 at the Texas Motor Speedway (TMS). A late race caution set up a green-white-checkered finish. This put Jimmie Johnson squarely on the rear bumper of Edwards. Johnson, however, could not mount a final charge and had to settle for second. Kyle Busch, winner of Saturday's NASCAR Nationwide Series race, rounded out the podium.

Only six caution flags fell during Sunday's event. Most of those were for debris and blown motors. The tire that Goodyear brought to Texas was praised by the majority of the NASCAR Sprint Cup garage area as it held up well. As a result, there were several long green flag runs. One particular run, after a lap 179 restart, continued uninterrupted for 115 laps.

Bobby Labonte and the No. 43 Cheerios Racing/Sam's Club Dodge finished 20th in the Samsung 500. Labonte was making his first 2008 visit to his home state and he was looking for his first career win at TMS. Ever-changing track conditions, however, had the setup on the Dodge amiss. The No. 43 team's race was a classic example of "hard work pays off." It's that type of teamwork that can help lead to a spot in the "Chase for the Sprint Cup."

Labonte began the race from the 30th position, but quickly worked his way towards the top-20. It was not long before he developed a "tight" condition that would linger throughout a majority of the event. Between green flag stops and those few caution periods, crew chief Jeff Meendering adjusted heavily on the No. 43 Dodge. As the hot Texas sun beat down on the racing surface, the cars began to loose overall grip. This

compounded Labonte's tight condition. Labonte and Meendering continued their coarse-tuning of the car and it eventually paid off. By lap 195, Labonte was running laps comparable to the cars in the top-10. He was in position for the "Lucky Dog Award" on several occasions. However, the 115 lap, green flag run allowed Edwards to put everyone up to the top-10 a lap down. This ruined Labonte's chance to get back on the lead lap and contend for the win.

"It's a battle out here every week," said Labonte. "It takes a total team effort and that's what we gave today. We would have liked to have had a better car at the start, but the track just really tightened up for us. It took a few pit stops for Jeff and I to figure out what we needed. But the car was good at the end. I'm just happy we got this finish. You know, we didn't tear anything up. We had good pit stops all day. Just a solid team effort."

The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series will visit the Phoenix (Ariz.) International Raceway next weekend for a Saturday night event. The race will be broadcast on FOX, the Motor Racing Network (MRN) and Sirius Satellite Radio channel 128.