



RACE REPORT:
No. 98 VERTIS / MENARDS FORD FUSION

DICKIES 500
1.5-Mile Texas Motor Speedway
Fort Worth, Texas
Sunday, November 8, 2009

RACE SUMMARY

Paul Menard

Started: 39th

Finished: 29th

Top Five

1. Kurt Busch, Dodge
2. Denny Hamlin, Toyota
3. Matt Kenseth, Ford
4. Mark Martin, Chevrolet
5. Kevin Harvick, Chevrolet



Complete Race Results:

<http://www.yatesracing.com/index.php?q=/articles/recaps98>

POINTS SUMMARY

Paul Menard

Race Total: 76 points

Season Total: 2,818 points, Ranked 33rd

SEASON SUMMARY

Paul Menard

Starts	Wins	Top Fives	Top 10s	Poles
34	0	0	0	0

No. 98 VERTIS / MENARDS FORD FUSION RECAP:

MENARD FINISHES 29th IN SUNDAY'S DICKIES 500 AT TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

FORT WORTH, TEXAS (November 8, 2009) – Paul Menard's No. 98 Vertis / Menards Ford Fusion received damage early in this afternoon's Dickies 500 at Texas Motor Speedway. Menard started the race from the 39th position and was part of an accident that happened on lap three of the 334-lap event. Menard's No. 98 Ford Fusion incurred damage to the front end/nose area, as result of the damage Menard struggled with the handling of the No. 98 and was relegated to a 29th-place finish.

Weather was not an issue in Texas and teams were able to run both practice and qualifying on Friday, as well as get in two practices on Saturday morning.

Pole winner Jeff Gordon led the 43-car field to the green flag shortly after 3:15pm (EST). Menard, who started 39th picked up a handful of spots during the first two laps. However, as the field exited turn two, points leader Jimmie Johnson was struck in the rear quarter panel by Sam Hornish, Jr. The contact sent Johnson spinning down the race track as the field quickly slowed behind him. Menard made hard contact with the rear bumper of another race car, denting in the nose of the No. 98 Vertis / Menards Ford Fusion.

In order to maintain track position, crew chief Larry Carter instructed Menard to stay out during the first pit stop. However, during the next green flag run, Menard noted the car's handling was not very good and it was very tough exiting the corners. On lap 50, Menard was lapped by race leader and eventual race winner Kurt Busch.

As the field began to make green-flag pit stops on lap 52, Carter called Menard down pit road on lap 53 for service to their Ford Fusion. Carter called for fuel, four new sticker tires, and a track bar adjustment to help Menard with the loose handling off the corners. Since the team pitted under green flag conditions, there was not enough time to fix the damage that had occurred just 50 laps prior.

The team had to wait for the next caution flag to really work on their race car. After being lapped again by Busch, the caution flag was displayed on lap 86 when the No. 77 spun coming off turn two. During the extended pit stop, the No. 98 team changed four tires, added two cans of fuel and did extensive work to the nose of their Ford Fusion. Following the pit stop, Menard exited the pits in the 34th position.

Entering the midpoint of the race, the handling had not improved and Menard was scored two laps down from the leader. Carter and the entire No. 98 team continued to make changes to their car, but nothing seemed to gain them any grip on the track.

In a final effort to gain track position, No. 98 team took a gamble on fuel at the end of the race. Before the final pit stop, Carter began instructing Menard to save as much fuel as possible. The team pitted with the exact number of laps they thought they would be able to run if the race remained green all the way through. The gamble paid off as Menard moved from 34th to 29th in the final run of the race as other competitors ran out of fuel during the closing laps.

“We got pretty behind on our car after we were involved in the wreck early on,” said Menard following the race. “Other than pit earlier, I don’t know what we could have done. The guys did the best they could to get the nose fixed, but it was pretty beat up. That will and can easily change how your car drives. Mine was horrible at times and decent at others. I thought we had a pretty good car going into this afternoon’s race, but when we were caught up in the wreck early, that really knocked us out of contention.”

Next week, the No. 98 Johns Manville / Menards team will make their final west coast trip of the season with a stop at Phoenix International Raceway. ABC television and MRN radio affiliates will carry the live race broadcast beginning at 3:00 p.m. (EST).

NEXT UP:

Checkers / O’Reilly’s 500

Phoenix International Raceway (One-mile speedway)

Avondale, Ariz.

Sunday, November 15, 2009