

**RACE RECAP:**

**Daytona International Speedway**

**DRIVE4COPD 300**

**Saturday, February 13, 2010**

**Paul Menard – No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion**

**MENARD AND NO. 98 RICHMOND/MENARDS FORD FUSION TEAM START LAST AND BRING HOME A SIXTH-PLACE FINISH IN THE NATIONWIDE SERIES SEASON-OPENER AT DAYTONA**

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Mother Nature brought rain to Daytona International Speedway on Friday, and forced NASCAR Nationwide Series Officials to cancel the DRIVE4COPD 300 qualifying session. Per the NASCAR rulebook, the starting lineup for the 2010 season-opener was based upon the 2009 owner point standings and by qualifying draw.

Paul Menard, driver of the No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion started 43rd and settled in for what was sure to be an exciting afternoon. After spending 58 of 120 laps in the top 15 and avoiding several close calls on the track, Menard finished Saturday's DRIVE4COPD 300 in sixth place.

Kyle Busch, 2009 NNS Champion started from the pole and led the 43-car field to the green flag and before the field completed a lap around the 2.5-mile super speedway the first of seven cautions was displayed. Menard stayed out during this caution period, however, just as green flag racing resumed on lap six another caution flag waved due to a spinning race car near Menard's Ford.

Fearful that the No. 98 may have incurred some damage in the incident, crew chief Matt Puccia called Menard to pit road. Menard entered pit road on lap nine in 26th position and his Ford received four tires, fuel and a few pieces of bare bond were attached to the minor rear end scuffs. Once the repairs were made and the team was confident their Ford was good as new, Menard exited pit road. The green flag waved on lap 11 and Menard was scored in 31st place.

Over the first full run of the race, Menard reported that his Ford was handling tight and needed a chassis adjustment, so when the field began making green flag pit stops on lap 43, Menard followed suit. Menard entered the pits in 20th position on lap 44 for tires, fuel and a wedge adjustment. He rejoined the pack in 21st place.

The race was stalled again on lap 50 and though the majority of the field opted to pit, Menard stayed on the track and was running fourth when racing continued on lap 55.

The next 13 laps of the race saw Menard and his Roush Fenway Racing teammates hook up their Fords and enjoy several laps bumper to bumper restrictor plate racing. As things were looking good for the Roush Fenway team, a competitor's car got loose and a multi-car melee resulted. Fortunately, Menard avoided the bulk of the crash and exited the incident with just minor left front damage. After pitting five times under caution for repairs, Menard's Ford was mended. He was scored in 19<sup>th</sup> position when green flag racing resumed on lap 78.

Three more cautions would stall the race before its conclusion, including a major accident involving several of the race leaders on lap 91. With guidance from spotter, Stevie Reeves and Menard's quick reaction, he avoided the wrecks and was running third when he took the green flag for the final time of the afternoon on lap 113.

In spite of the tremendous Ford horsepower, Menard could not hold his position when another competitor tapped the left rear of his No. 98 and sent it up the track. Menard lost three spots in the incident and crossed the finish line in sixth place.

"I'm really happy with how today turned out," said Menard after the race. "We had an uphill battle today for sure and managed to come away with a top-10 finish. My guys did a great job in the pits and my spotter kept me out of a lot of wrecks. I feel really good about how we all worked together and I am looking forward to a great season with this team."

Tony Stewart held off a pack of cars on his bumper to win the DRIVE4COPD NASCAR Nationwide Series 300 at Daytona International Speedway. Stewart, who had won four of these races prior to this Saturday, dodged numerous wrecks to win his fifth of the last six Nationwide races here.

Roush Fenway Racing driver, Carl Edwards finished where he started, in second place. Kevin Harvick was third and Justin Allgaier fourth. Rounding out the top 10 were Brian Vickers, Menard, who started the race in last place, Joey Logano, James Buescher, Kasey Kahne and Steve Wallace.

Menard and the No. 98 Richmond/Menards Ford Fusion team race next at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif. The Stater Bros. is scheduled for Saturday, February 20 at 2:00 p.m. (EST). ESPN and MRN radio affiliates will broadcast the race live.

**UPCOMING RACE:**

**Auto Club Speedway**

**Saturday, February 20, 2010**

**2:00 p.m. (EST) ESPN television and MRN radio**

**MENARD'S DAYTONA STATS:**

**Start:** 43<sup>rd</sup>

**Finish:** Sixth

**Laps:** 120/120

**Points:** 150

**Status:** Running

**Fastest Laps:** Two

**Laps in top 15:** 58

**2010 CUMULATIVE STATS:**

**Races:** 1 of 35

**Points:**

**Rank:** Sixth

**Top fives:** 0

**Top 10s:** 1

**Starts:** 1

**Poles:** 0