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Kevin Harvick Brings Home Sixth-Place Finish at World's Fastest Half-Mile

BRISTOL, Tenn. (March 21, 2011) — After a weekend off from racing the NASCAR Nationwide Series returned to action Saturday at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway. Kevin Harvick put the No. 33 Rheem Chevrolet Impala in the eighth starting position for the 300-lap afternoon event. As the 43-car field roared to life, Harvick wheeled the Kevin Harvick Inc. (KHI) machine on a campaign to the front moving up several positions in just the first two laps.

At the competition caution at lap 25, which NASCAR called in order for teams to put on new right-side tires due to tire-wear issues discovered in the previous day's practice sessions, Harvick relayed that the car was pretty good so the KHI crew opted for no adjustments as they bolted on four fresh tires and added fuel. The No. 33 car took the lap 32 restart from the 12th position.

A solid green-flag run ensued and Harvick raced to regain track position among the top 10. Near the lap 70 mark, the caution flag waved for the second time, this time for an accident in turn three. Harvick communicated to crew chief David Hyder that his Rheem Chevrolet had become very tight in the middle of the turns. Hyder used the caution period to bring his driver down pit road for a slight air-pressure adjustment as well as a chassis adjustment to help alleviate the issues reported.

When the field returned to green-flag conditions at lap 78, Harvick returned to making his way to the front of the pack. At the halfway mark, the No. 33 car was solidly inside the top-five but Harvick communicated to his crew that his Chevrolet was still battling tight-handling conditions. Hyder worked up a plan to remedy the issues and with the third caution flag of the day at lap 182 brought Harvick in for both air-pressure and chassis adjustments.

Green-flag racing resumed at lap 188 with the No. 33 Rheem Chevrolet in the fifth position. Like with lap one of the contest, Harvick charged ahead several positions moving to the third position in a matter of two laps around the 0.533-mile track.

Another yellow flag waved slowing the field at lap 200. Harvick, in the fourth position at the time of caution, opted to stay out. Quickly back to green at lap 204 the driver once again advanced positions in two short laps. As Harvick settled into the second position, the fifth caution period of the day came at lap 207. The KHI team again decided to stay on track during the caution and restarted the event at lap 212 from the second position.

Harvick fought to maintain his position and overtake the leader but moved into the third position at lap 223. The driver was able to race among the top four in the field as the laps wound down but continued to fight a tight-handling Chevrolet.

In the remaining 75 laps, the event came under yellow-flag conditions three additional times. The KHI team made the decision to come to pit road during only one of three caution periods and on that final stop went with further chassis adjustments in an attempt to correct the handling issues Harvick had been battling. The driver was shuffled out of the top four with fewer than 30 laps to go and when the checkered flag flew came across the start/finish line in the sixth position.

The NASCAR Nationwide Series heads out west to Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif. for the fifth race of the season on Saturday, March 26. Tune in to ESPN at 5:30 p.m. EST and 5:00 p.m. EST on MRN.

RACE RECAP:

March 19, 2011
Bristol Motor Speedway
Race: 4 of 34
Started: 8th
Finished: 6th
Owner's Point Standings: 5th (-10)

Up Next on the Nationwide Series Schedule:

Date: March 26, 2011
Track: Auto Club Speedway
Driver: Kevin Harvick
Event Name: Royal Purple 300
Broadcast: ESPN 5:30 p.m. EST,
MRN 5:00 p.m. EST

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