

The Aaron's 499 at Talladega Superspeedway

By Phillip Prichard, Photos MSA Staff

The Aaron's 499 kept fans on the edge of their seats whether they were trackside or in front of the TV, from the starting lap, the racing action was two to four wide racing for the entire 188 laps. David Ragan in a pre-race interview stated it is going to be a heck of a show and he was correct.

Denny Hamlin scored his first win of the season in 45th Annual Aaron's 499 at Talladega Superspeedway. Hamlin was ahead of the field and declared the winner of the race when caution flew for a multi-car accident on the final lap of the race. Greg Biffle finished second with Clint Bowyer, Brian Vickers and AJ Allmendinger the top five. Paul Menard, Kevin Harvick, Kasey Kahne, Kyle Larson and Ricky Stenhouse Jr. rounded out the first ten finishers.

The Joe Gibbs Racing driver had the top spot when the caution flew for a Carl Edwards-Ryan Newman crash with five laps to go. He held the lead on a restart with two laps to go and took the white flag just after another crash erupted. With a large piece of debris sitting on track at the start-finish line, NASCAR displayed caution and the race was over.

Brian Scott started on the Coors Light Pole as a result of a lap time of 48.293 seconds, 198.290 mph in the knockout qualifying on Saturday. Scott was unable to lead a lap, Paul Menard led the first lap. Danica Patrick took the lead on Lap 6 to be the first woman to lead a lap at the Talladega Superspeedway. Patrick finished 22nd on Sunday, which is the best finish for a female driver at Talladega. There were 48 lead changes among 23 drivers. By lap 101, there had been 25 lead changes.

There were 8 cautions for a total of 31 yellow flags laps.

The first caution was on lap 14, Brad Keselowski in an aggressive move to take the lead was bumped by Danica Patrick sending him into a wild spin in the infield. The spin

caused radiator damage to the 2 and he ended up a number of laps down. The two "Big One" crashes came on lap 137 and lap 175. On lap 137 the #2-Keselowski, who was 6 laps down at the time, got loose and spun, involving: #21-Bayne, #24-Gordon, #14-Stewart, #7-Annett, #18-Busch, #20-Kenseth, #23-Bowman, #26-Whitt, #27-Menard, #33-Scott and #48-Johnson. On lap 175: the #48-Johnson got loose, got into #17-Stenhouse, moved up into #22-Logano who went into the outside wall involving: #41-Busch, #34-Ragan, #95-McDowell and #36-Sorenson.

Unfortunately the day's last caution robbed fans of what was shaping up to be an exemplary Talladega shootout to decide the winner. But NASCAR had no choice but to end the race with the yellow when Justin Allgaier's bumper wound up in the middle of the track at the start-finish line from another multi-car crash after the field took the white flag.

43 different drivers have won at Talladega Superspeedway, led by Dale Earnhardt with 10. Jeff Gordon leads all active drivers with six. Richard Childress Racing has the most wins at Talladega in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series with 12; followed by Hendrick Motorsports with 11. Nine different manufacturers have won in the NSCS at Talladega; led by Chevrolet with 38 victories; followed by Ford with 21.

The Sprint Cup Series will compete at the GEICO 500 on October 19 at the Talladega Superspeedway. Plan on another action packed weekend of racing.



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