

Austin Dillon holds off charging Ryan Blaney for XFINITY win in Las Vegas

As dominant as Austin Dillon was in Saturday's Boyd Gaming 300 NASCAR XFINITY Series race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, he had to give his utmost effort in the closing laps to hold off charging Ryan Blaney for the victory.

Dillon led 183 of the 200 laps at the 1.5-mile speedway, but Blaney had a tire advantage at the end of the race, thanks to a late pit stop after his car snapped loose and knocked Erik Jones into the outside wall at the exit from Turn 4.

After restarting fifth with 21 laps left, Blaney charged to the front, making up a deficit of more than 1.5 seconds and forcing Dillon to block him repeatedly during the last three laps. Blaney ran out of room in the final corner, his No. 22 Ford turning sideways and tagging the outside wall as Dillon crossed the finish line with an advantage of .664 seconds.

During the closing laps, winning crew chief Nick Harrison made a point of not telling Dillon that Blaney had fresh tires.

"There at the end, you've got to do what you've got to do," said Dillon, who won for the third time in the XFINITY Series and the first time at Las Vegas. "You got to do whatever you can to win. Our car was dominant all day, and to give one away like that would have been heartbreaking.

"I hadn't heard in my ear all day that somebody was catching me, and he was catching me at about three tenths (of a second) a lap. And that was all I had. The other good thing is that my crew chief made sure no one told me that he had tires on, so I wouldn't second-guess myself. I just thought I was getting slower—I didn't know what I was doing wrong."

In his post-race question-and-answer session with reporters, Blaney was more distraught about his contact with Erik Jones than he was disappointed with his



Austin Dillon, driver of the #33 Rheem Chevrolet, celebrates with a burn-out after winning the NASCAR XFINITY Series Boyd Gaming 300 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on March 7, 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Photo: Patrick Smith/NASCAR via Getty Images

runner-up finish. And after the run-in with Jones, Blaney wasn't about to move Dillon for the win in the closing laps.

"I didn't want any more people saying bad things about me after I wrecked Erik," said Blaney, who passed fourth-place finisher Denny Hamlin on Lap 190 and third-place Regan Smith on Lap 193 before charging after Dillon. "I wasn't going to move Austin, that's for sure.

"He did what he had to do. He stopped my run. I didn't expect him to pull over. So, no, I wasn't going to move him to win the race."

Chase Elliott came home fifth, followed by hometown favorite Brendan Gaughan, rookie Darrell Wallace Jr., Ty Dillon, Brennan Poole and Daniel Suarez.

Ty Dillon, Austin's brother, took over the series lead by six points over Chris Buescher, who came home 14th.

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