

= 2011 Kobalt Tools 400 =

The 2011 Kobalt Tools 400 was a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series stock car race that was held on March 6 , 2011 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in Clark County , Nevada . Contested over 267 laps , it was the third race of the 2011 season . Carl Edwards , driving for Roush Fenway Racing , won the race . Tony Stewart finished second and Juan Pablo Montoya finished third .

Polesitter Matt Kenseth maintained his lead on the first lap to begin the race , as Greg Biffle , who started in the fourth position on the grid , remained behind him . On the 8th lap , the first caution was given because Robby Gordon spun sideways . Following the second caution , Stewart became the leader , and increased his lead to 6 @. @ 5 seconds by lap 95 . Late in the race , Stewart was given a penalty for speeding on pit road , giving the lead to Edwards . Edwards remained the leader to win for the second time at Las Vegas Motor Speedway .

There were seven cautions and 22 lead changes among 15 different drivers throughout the course of the race . It was Edwards ' first win in the 2011 season and the 20th of his career . The result moved Edwards up to the third position in the Drivers ' Championship , seven points behind Stewart while being tied with Montoya . Ford maintained its lead in the Manufacturers ' Championship , three points ahead of Chevrolet and five ahead of Toyota , with 33 races remaining in the season . A total of 152 @, @ 000 people attended the race , while 10 @. @ 1 million watched it on television .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Las Vegas Motor Speedway is one of ten intermediate tracks to hold NASCAR races . The race was scheduled to be held on the standard track at Las Vegas Motor Speedway ; a four @- @ turn D @- @ shaped oval track that is 1 @. @ 5 miles (2 @. @ 4 km) long . The track 's turns are banked at 20 degrees , while the front stretch , the location of the finish line , and the back stretch on the opposite side of the track are banked at nine degrees . The racetrack has seats for 142 @, @ 000 spectators .

Before the race , Kyle Busch was leading the Drivers ' Championship with 80 points , and Kurt Busch stood in second with 77 points . Tony Stewart and A. J. Allmendinger followed tied for third and fourth with 69 points , four ahead of Jeff Gordon and Mark Martin , who were tied for fifth . In the Manufacturers ' Championship , Ford , Toyota and Chevrolet were leading with twelve points , four points ahead of Dodge . Jimmie Johnson was the race 's defending winner from 2010 .

= = = Practice and qualifying = = =

Two practice sessions were held in preparation for the race ; one on Friday and the other on Saturday . The first session lasted 90 minutes long , while the second was 75 minutes long . Matt Kenseth was quickest with a time of 28 @. @ 939 seconds in the first session , 0 @. @ 047 seconds faster than David Ragan . Montoya was just off Ragan 's pace , followed by Carl Edwards , Greg Biffle , and Marcos Ambrose . Stewart was seventh , still within a second of Kenseth 's time . Also in the first practice session , Jeff Gordon spun sideways after the fourth turn .

Forty @- @ four cars were entered for qualifying ; however , only forty @- @ three could qualify for the race because of NASCAR 's qualifying procedure . Kenseth clinched the fifth pole position of his career , with a time of 28 @. @ 589 seconds . He was joined on the front row of the grid by Ambrose . Edwards qualified third , Biffle took fourth , and Kyle Busch started fifth . Joey Logano , Allmendinger , Newman , Martin Truex , Jr. and Martin rounded out the top ten . The only driver that failed to qualify for the race was Brian Keselowski . Once the qualifying session completed , Kenseth commented , " Qualifying is not my strong suit , but I knew we had a really fast car today when we did our last qualifying run [in practice] . Honestly , this is the most nervous I 've been before qualifying in probably five years at least , because I knew we had a shot at the pole , and I knew last

week we really messed up . I didn 't want to mess up a fast car today , so I was really happy with that . "

In the second and final practice , Kenseth remained quickest with a time of 29 @. @ 330 seconds . Kyle Busch followed in second , ahead of Newman and Edwards . Biffle was fifth quickest , with a time of 29 @. @ 393 seconds . David Reutimann , Truex , Stewart , Logano , and Denny Hamlin rounded out the top ten positions . Ragan , who was second in the first session , could only manage 12th .

= = = Race = = =

The race , the third in the season , began at 3 : 00 p.m. EST and was televised live in the United States on Fox . The conditions on the grid were dry before the race with the air temperature at 60 ° F (16 ° C) . Las Vegas Motor Speedway Chaplain Joe Freiburger began pre @- @ race ceremonies , by giving the invocation . Next , Kristen Hertenberg , from Phantom @- @ Las Vegas Spectacular , performed the national anthem , and Gray Abercrombie , Lowe 's sports marketing manager , gave the command for drivers to start their engines . During the pace laps , Hamlin had to move to the rear of the grid because of him changing his engine .

Kenseth retained his pole position lead into the first corner , followed by Biffle , who started fourth . Over the following two laps , Edwards fell to the fourth position , while Biffle passed Kenseth for the lead . After starting 16th on the grid , Trevor Bayne moved up to 11th by the fifth lap . On the following lap , Truex fell three positions to ninth . At lap eight , the first caution was given after Robby Gordon spun sideways . Most of the front runners made pit stops during the caution , while Jeff Gordon stayed out to become the leader . During the lap 12 restart , Jeff Gordon was the leader ahead of Stewart and Montoya . However , Stewart passed Gordon to become the leader on the next lap . Also on the same lap , Kenseth drove to pit road after having a flat tire . On the 14th lap , Stewart remained the leader , while Kurt Busch moved to the second position ahead of Jeff Gordon . Afterward , Andy Lally spun sideways , prompting the second caution . Few drivers made pit stops during the caution . At the lap 18 restart , Stewart was first , followed by Busch , Gordon , and Montoya . By the 20th lap , Reutimann , who started 25th on the grid , had moved up 18 positions .

By lap 24 , Stewart maintained a 1 @. @ 7 second lead over Busch , as Gordon fell to sixth . Stewart continued to increase his lead over the next ten laps , while Busch remained in the second position . On the 35th lap , Reutimann moved up to the sixth position . Seven laps later , Jamie McMurray and Keselowski made contact with each other . On the following lap , Paul Menard moved up to 12th . At the 45th lap , Stewart had a 3 @. @ 6 second lead over Busch , as Johnson fell to 23rd . On the next lap , Biffle claimed second away from Busch . During lap 49 , green flag pit stops began with Kurt Busch and Reutimann . On lap 51 , Gordon , Montoya , made pit stops , as Biffle became the leader . Once green flag pit stops concluded on lap 62 , Stewart reclaimed the first position ahead of Kyle Busch . Two laps later , Biffle claimed moved up to the fourth position . On the next lap , Bill Elliott claimed the fifth position . Stewart increased his lead to 1 @. @ 6 seconds by the 67th lap . At lap 74 , Gordon moved up into the tenth position after passing Logano . Four laps later , Kevin Harvick moved up to the 14th position . On lap 81 , Harvick claimed the 13th position .

During lap 87 , Gordon moved up to the tenth position . By the 95th lap , Stewart had increased his lead to 6 @. @ 5 seconds over second place . On the next lap , the third caution was given after Kyle Busch collided into the wall because of a flat tire . Most of the frontrunners made pit stops during the caution . At the 101 restart , Stewart was the leader . On the following lap , Kurt Busch and Kahne spun sideways , prompting the fourth caution to be given . On the lap 106 restart , Stewart remained the leader ahead of Edwards and Biffle in second and third . On the 107th lap , Biffle passed Edwards for the second position . Afterward , Kyle Busch 's engine failed , causing the fifth caution to come out . At lap 115 , Stewart led Biffle on the restart . During lap 121 , Edwards passed Biffle to claim second , as Stewart increased his lead . Ten laps later , Harvick moved up to the sixth position . On lap 138 , Dale Earnhardt , Jr. claimed the seventh position , while Truex fell to sixth . Eleven laps later , the sixth caution was given because Gilliland collided into the wall after having a flat tire . During the caution , most of the teams made pit stops . Also on the same lap ,

Stewart and Harvick received a penalty after having speeding on pit road .

At the lap 156 restart , Edwards became the leader ahead of Truex . Edwards maintained the lead on the next lap , as Montoya moved up into third . By lap 159 , Edwards had a 1 @. @ 25 second lead over Truex . Five laps later , Johnson passed Gordon for the ninth position . Edwards continued to increase his lead to 2 @. @ 6 seconds by lap 171 . After having a speed penalty , Stewart had moved up to 18th by the 178th lap . On lap 185 , Clint Bowyer moved up to 16th , while Edwards increased his lead to 2 @. @ 9 seconds . Nine laps later , the seventh caution was given after Gordon collided into the wall after having a flat tire . Most of the drivers made pit stops during the caution , as Stewart reclaimed the first position at the lap 202 restart . By the 214th lap , Stewart had a lead of 2 @. @ 45 seconds . Four laps later , Menard moved up to the tenth position after passing Brian Vickers . On lap 220 , Edwards passed Truex to claim third , as Stewart increased his lead to 3 seconds . Five laps later , Hamlin moved up to the seventh position . On lap 234 , green flag pit stops began with Stewart and Montoya . Two laps later , Harvick and Johnson made pit stops , five laps before Edwards and Truex .

Once the green flag pit stops concluded , Edwards was the leader , 1 @. @ 1 seconds ahead of Montoya . By the 250th lap , Edwards increased his lead to 1 @. @ 6 seconds . On the following lap , Kurt Busch moved into the tenth position , as Newman moved up to fifth . With four laps remaining , Stewart passed Montoya for the second position . Edwards maintained the lead to win his first race of the 2011 season . Stewart finished second , ahead of Montoya in third and Ambrose in fourth . Newman clinched the fifth position , after starting eighth .

= = = Post @-@ race = = =

Edwards appeared in victory lane after his victory lap to start celebrating his first win of the season , in front of a crowd of 152 @, @ 000 people . " These guys are unbelievable . It means a lot coming off Phoenix . I went home last week and didn ' t know how things were going to go . You don ' t get a good race car like that often . We had another one today , " said Edwards of his triumph .

Although Stewart was leading the race near the end , Edwards passed him after the final pit stops . Stewart , who finished second , said , " I don ' t know what happened on the pit stop there , but we had a miscue and had a penalty and had to go to the back , and unfortunately it kind of dealt our cards for us . [Crew chief] Darian Grubb made a good call getting us the track position back , but it also showed everybody else that they could do it , too , and we couldn ' t run two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half runs on a set of left @-@ side tires . " In the subsequent press conference , Kyle Busch stated his frustration from his accident , " On the restart there [on Lap 107] , I was going to bide my time and try to get back through traffic with plenty of time to go , and ' kablooey ' ? it just broke . " Doug Yates , the engine builder for Roush Fenway Racing , expressed his enjoyment of winning the race :

" This is an exciting win for Roush Yates Engines . We ran great all week long . I think this says a lot about our program and how we plan to run at 1 @. @ 5 mile tracks throughout the 2011 season . I want to thank Ford again for their support as we continue to excel with the FR9 engine . "

Stewart also commented , " It kills me to throw a race away like that , especially at a place we haven ' t won at yet . This was a big deal [Sunday] , and when you lead that many laps and have a car that ' s that fast and you lose it ... I ' m sure [Monday] when the emotion dies down we ' ll look back and say it was a great weekend . But , man , it does not sit good right now . " The race result moved Stewart into the first position in the Driver ' s Championship with 113 points , tied with Kurt Busch in second . Edwards , the winner of the race , and Montoya followed in third and fourth on 106 , three points ahead of Newman in fifth . Ford maintained their lead in the Manufacturers ' Championship with 21 points . Chevrolet and Toyota placed second and third with 18 and 16 points , while Dodge was fourth with 11 . 10 @. @ 1 million people watched the race on television . The race took two hours , fifty @-@ seven minutes and twenty seconds to complete , and the margin of victory was 1 @. @ 246 seconds .

= = Results = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

= = = Race results = = =

= = Standings after the race = =