

= 2006 Bank of America 500 =

The 2006 Bank of America 500 was the 31st stock car race of the 2006 NASCAR Nextel Cup Series and the fifth in the ten @-@ race season @-@ ending Chase for the Nextel Cup . It was held on October 14 , 2006 , before a crowd of 175 @,@ 000 in Concord , North Carolina , at Lowe 's Motor Speedway , one of ten intermediate tracks to hold NASCAR races . The 334 @-@ lap race was won by Kasey Kahne of the Evernham Motorsports team , who started from second position . Jimmie Johnson finished second and Jeff Burton came in third .

Although Scott Riggs won the pole position , he was immediately passed by teammate Kahne at the start of the race . Riggs regained the lap twelve laps later , only to lose it to Tony Raines on the 19th lap . Riggs retook the lead on lap 31 and maintained it for the following sixteen laps , until he was passed by Dale Earnhardt , Jr. who led the next 31 laps . Kahne moved back into the first position on lap 96 , with Raines moving back into the lead on the 123rd lap . Kahne passed Raines to move back into the lead 15 laps later . Johnson moved into the lead on lap 168 and held the position for a total of 72 laps . At the race 's final restart on lap 307 Johnson led until he was passed two laps later by Kahne who maintained it to win the race . There was a total of ten cautions and 34 lead changes by thirteen different drivers .

The victory was Kahne 's sixth of the season , and the seventh of his career . After the race Burton maintained his lead in the Drivers ' Championship , which increased to 45 points over nearest rival Matt Kenseth . Kahne 's victory moved him from ninth to eighth , while Jeff Gordon dropped to tenth because his engine failed in the race 's closing laps . Chevrolet maintained its lead in the Manufacturers ' Championship , 48 points ahead of Dodge and 54 ahead of Ford with five races left in the season .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

The Bank of America 500 was the 31st of 36 scheduled stock car races of the 2006 NASCAR Nextel Cup Series , and the fifth in the ten @-@ race season @-@ ending Chase for the Nextel Cup . It was held on October 14 , 2006 , at Lowe 's Motor Speedway ( now called Charlotte Motor Speedway ) in Concord , North Carolina , one of ten intermediate tracks to hold NASCAR races ; the others are Atlanta Motor Speedway , Kansas Speedway , Chicagoland Speedway , Darlington Raceway , Homestead @-@ Miami Speedway , New Hampshire Motor Speedway , Kentucky Speedway , Las Vegas Motor Speedway , and Texas Motor Speedway . The standard track at Lowe 's Motor Speedway is a four @-@ turn , 1 @.@ 5 @-@ mile ( 2 @.@ 4 km ) -long , quad @-@ oval track . The track 's turns are banked at twenty @-@ four degrees ; both the front stretch ( the location of the finish line ) and the back stretch ( opposite the front ) have a five @-@ degree banking .

Before the race Jeff Burton led the Drivers ' Championship with 5 @,@ 598 points , with Matt Kenseth second , and Mark Martin third . Kevin Harvick and Denny Hamlin were fourth and fifth . Dale Earnhardt , Jr. , Jeff Gordon , Jimmie Johnson , Kasey Kahne , and Kyle Busch rounded out the top ten drivers competing in the 2006 Chase for the Nextel Cup . Chevrolet was leading the Manufacturers ' Championship with 231 points ; Dodge was second with 180 , and Ford was a close third on 179 . Johnson was the race 's defending champion . NASCAR mandated that teams use a 13 @.@ 8 @-@ US @-@ gallon ( 52 l ; 11 @.@ 5 imp gal ) fuel cell which would allow fewer laps between pit stops and increase the occurrence of tire changes . Tire supplier Goodyear brought a new right @-@ hand tire compound in hopes that racing would be improved . Testing of the tires took place at the track on August 29 with drivers Joe Nemechek and Kurt Busch who believed Goodyear had rectified problems with harder @-@ compound tires that were raised at the previous round at Charlotte ( the Coca @-@ Cola 600 ) .

After he was rammed by his teammate Brian Vickers in the UAW @-@ Ford 500 , Johnson said the

expectations for him to succeed at Lowe 's Motor Speedway were high and hoped the track 's surface would be more predictable . Martin said he was in the best position that he had been in for several years to win the championship , and stated he was less interested at looking at race results . Having secured one top @-@ ten finish in the season 's first four Chase for the Nextel Cup races , Earnhardt stated he need to secure a top @-@ five finishing position , and was determined to get his team more involved in the championship battle . Gordon had driven well at the circuit , but without finishing . His team brought the car he drove to victory in the season 's 18th race at Chicagoland Speedway . Gordon felt it would help him at intermediate tracks and get him back into championship contention . Following a poor start in the chase , which improved after he finished second at Talladega Superspeedway , Kahne believed the momentum would be carried into Charlotte and stated he would race hard to win races .

One team made its début at the race . Red Bull Racing Team elected to start operations early as part of a warm @-@ up exercise to running a full @-@ time schedule in 2007 with 1988 NASCAR Winston Cup Series champion Bill Elliott driving the No. 83 car . Elliott would attempt to qualify the car at three races towards the end of the year . He said that his decision to join Red Bull was because of the organization , and its wiliness to become competitive , which had attracted him to the team . Elliott stated that he was required to qualify the car for the race and move up the field , and provide input that would allow the team to be prepared for the 2007 Daytona 500 .

= = = Practice and qualification = = =

Three practice sessions were held before the Sunday race - one each on Thursday , Friday and , Saturday . The first practice session lasted 90 minutes , the second 60 minutes , and the third 50 minutes . Kahne set the fastest time in the first practice session with a lap of 28 @.@ 834 seconds ; Scott Riggs was second , and Kurt Busch third . Elliott Sadler took fourth position , and Martin placed fifth . Johnson , Nemechek , Martin Truex , Jr . , Jeff Green , and Hamlin rounded out the session 's top @-@ ten fastest drivers .

Although 52 cars were entered in the qualifier , according to NASCAR 's qualifying procedure , only 43 could race . Each driver ran two laps , with the starting order determined by the competitor 's fastest times . Riggs clinched the third pole position of his career , and his third consecutive at Lowe 's Motor Speedway , with a time of 28 @.@ 203 seconds . He was joined on the grid 's front row by Kahne , his Evernham Motorsports teammate , and held the pole position until Riggs ' lap . Kurt Busch originally qualified in third , but his car 's right @-@ rear shock absorber was found to have violated NASCAR regulations during the post @-@ qualifying inspection because it did not work as required . Busch was required to start from 42nd position after using a provisional . As a result , Casey Mears inherited third , Sadler fourth , and Harvick fifth . Burton , Martin , Clint Bowyer , Reed Sorenson and Johnson rounded out the top ten qualifiers . Kenseth , a Chase for the Nextel Cup driver , qualified eleventh , while Earnhardt took 16th and Kyle Busch 18th . The nine drivers who failed to qualify were : Elliott , Kevin Lepage , Derrike Cope , Chad Chaffin , Hermie Sadler , Kirk Sheldermine , Kenny Wallace ( who crashed on his first timed lap ) , Morgan Shepherd ( who elected not to set a lap time ) , and Carl Long ( who crashed while attempting to record a timed lap ) . After the qualifier Riggs said that his team knew his car was good , and achieved a good draw by recording his lap time in the latter period of the session . He stated when returning to the track , his team wanted to get back into a rhythm of starting and finishing in a top position .

On Friday afternoon Kyle Busch was fastest in the second practice session with a time of 29 @.@ 378 seconds , ahead of Kahne and Robby Gordon . Bowyer was fourth @-@ fastest ; Johnson was fifth and Truex sixth . Greg Biffle , Kurt Busch , Burton , and Martin followed in the top ten . Of the other drivers in the Chase , Edwards was eleventh @-@ fastest , Hamlin set the twelfth @-@ fastest time , and Harvick was 15th . Ryan Newman crashed and switched to a back @-@ up car . Later , on Saturday afternoon , Earnhardt paced the final practice session with a time of 29 @.@ 357 ; Kyle Busch was second and Hamlin third . Kahne was fourth @-@ fastest , ahead of Johnson and Bowyer . Biffle was seventh @-@ fastest , Truex eighth , Riggs ninth , and Robby Gordon tenth . Other Chase drivers included Jeff Gordon in 13th and Burton in 15th ; all were within three @-@

tenths of a second of Earnhardt 's time .

== Race ==

Live television coverage of the race on NBC began at 7 : 04 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time in the United States . Around the start of the race , weather conditions were sunny with an air temperature of 64 ° F ( 18 ° C ) which was forecast to drop as the race progressed . Dr. William K. Thierfelder , president of Belmont Abbey College in Belmont , North Carolina , began pre -race ceremonies with an invocation . American Idol contestant and country music singer Kellie Pickler performed the national anthem , and Mickey Jackson , the winner of a sponsored Grand Marshal contest , along with his five -year -old son Kalob , commanded the drivers to start their engines . During the pace laps , Newman moved to the rear of the field because he switched to his back -up car .

The race started at 7 : 21 p.m. Kahne accelerated faster than teammate Riggs off the line , and was ahead of him by the second turn . The first caution of the race was given one lap later when Todd Bodine contacted Robby Gordon in the tri -oval . Gordon slid but regained control of his car with Bodine slowing . This triggered a multi -car accident that involved Mike Bliss hitting the rear of Hamlin 's car sending him spinning down the front stretch which then involved Mike Skinner , Truex , Jeff Gordon , Jamie McMurray , Kyle Petty , J. J. Yeley , Travis Kvapil , David Gilliland , Tony Stewart , Kurt Busch , Newman , and Nemechek who blocked the track temporarily . Hamlin drove back to his garage where his team repaired his car . Kahne led the field at the lap -nine restart , followed by Riggs and Mears . A caution was issued immediately at the start of lap nine , as the cars drove through the first turn , because three safety vehicles were on the track after crew members did not hear there would one further lap added before racing resumed , and the laps were counted towards the first caution . Several cars elected to make pit stops under caution . Stewart made repairs to his car 's body which was damaged in the lap two crash . Kahne maintained the top position at the lap twelve restart , with Riggs in second . Riggs reclaimed the first position from Kahne on the 13th lap ; after starting from 41st , Jeff Gordon moved up to 22nd position by lap 15 . Two laps later , Dave Blaney spun after leaving turn four and hit the outside barrier with his car 's left -rear quarter , triggering the race 's second caution . Most of the field , including Riggs , chose to make pit stops for fuel and tires .

Tony Raines decided not to make a pit stop and led the field back up to speed at the lap -22 restart , ahead of Newman , McMurray , Terry Labonte , and Riggs . On the 23rd lap , Riggs and Kahne got ahead of Labonte for fourth and fifth positions . Riggs passed McMurray for third one lap later , and Kahne got ahead of McMurray for fourth on lap 25 . Newman fell to fourth place when he was passed by Riggs and Kahne two laps later . Riggs passed Raines for the lead on the 30th lap , while Kahne moved into second place . Truex hit the wall on the same lap but no caution was shown . Sorenson ran into the rear -end of Dale Jarrett 's car , who spun backwards into the turn four wall , prompting the third caution . Jarrett retired from the race when he drove into his garage . All drivers elected to make pit stops for fuel under caution . Riggs maintained his lead at the lap -39 restart , followed by Kahne and Bowyer . Johnson got ahead of Sadler to move into eighth on lap 44 . On lap 46 , a fourth caution was given ; Todd Kluever was hit by Greg Biffle after leaving turn two and spun on the backstretch , causing Ken Schrader and Petty to hit Kluever . Michael Waltrip contacted the wall in avoidance . Most drivers ( including Riggs ) chose to make pit stops for fuel . Earnhardt led at the lap -53 restart ahead of Edwards , Newman , Biffle and , Sorenson who all chose not to pit . Riggs moved back into third place on lap 59 after passing Biffle and Newman . By lap 66 , Earnhardt held a 1 -lap -78 -second advantage over Edwards . Two laps later , Riggs passed Edwards to take over second place .

Riggs closed the gap to Earnhardt , and was 1 -lap -5 seconds behind by lap 75 . Green -flag pit stops began on lap 78 , with Earnhardt stopping on lap 79 , giving the lead back to Riggs . Kahne and Riggs made pit stops on the 85th lap for scuffed right -hand tires . After the pit stops , which concluded on lap 91 , Riggs reclaimed the first position . Kahne closed the gap to teammate Riggs , who was holding a 0 -lap -4 second lead , by lap 95 . One lap later , Kahne passed Riggs (

who complained his car was experiencing excessive understeer ) for first place . Earnhardt moved into second when he passed Riggs on the 100th lap . Lap 105 saw the fifth caution ; Waltrip lost control of his car and hit the turn four outside wall , which caused him to spin while attempting to make a pit stop for fuel . During the caution , all drivers again made pit stops . Kahne maintained the lead at the lap @-@ 110 restart , followed by Earnhardt and Bowyer . Gordon passed Bowyer to claim third position one lap later . Bowyer lost two further positions when he was passed on the 115th lap . A sixth caution was prompted on the following lap when Kurt Busch spun leaving turn two and hit the inside wall on the backstretch ; Sorenson lost control in turn two , while attempting to avoid Busch , and went towards the inside backstretch wall . Most of the leaders , including Kahne , made pit stops for fuel . Harvick and Kahne avoided a collision on pit road . Sadler led the field at the lap @-@ 121 restart , followed by Raines and Robby Gordon . Raines passed Sadler to reclaim the lead two laps later , while Sadler drove back to pit road with engine problems on lap 125 .

Kahne moved up into second place by lap 132 after passing Jeff Gordon , Earnhardt , and Robby Gordon . Johnson got ahead of Robby Gordon for fourth place one lap later . Kahne moved back into the lead after passing Raines on the backstretch on lap 138 , while Johnson moved into second one lap later . The second round of green @-@ flag pit stops commenced on lap 143 , when Robby Gordon made a pit stop for right @-@ side tires and car adjustments . Kahne stopped on lap 154 with Riggs . Jeff Gordon and Johnson made similar stops over the next three laps . After the pit stops , Kahne reclaimed the lead after battling with Raines . A seventh caution was given three laps later when Gilliland spun in turn two and contacted the inside wall heavily , and then drove to his garage to retire . Most of the leaders , including Kahne , made pit stops . Sterling Marlin stayed out and led at the lap @-@ 168 restart , ahead of Johnson . That same lap , Marlin lost the lead when Johnson passed him on the backstretch , and Marlin was passed by Kahne for second on lap 169 . Martin got ahead of Earnhardt for fifth position ten laps later . By lap 180 , Johnson held a 1 @-@ 4 @-@ second lead over Kahne . Gordon passed Martin for third on lap 182 , while Edwards got ahead of Kyle Busch for seventh two laps later . Upfront , Kahne closed the gap with Johnson to 0 @-@ 6 seconds by the 188th lap . The third round of green @-@ flag pit stops began on lap 199 ; Johnson stopped on lap 203 , while Earnhardt made a pit stop on the following lap . After the pit stops , Kahne retook the lead .

Johnson drove to the track 's inside at turn three and passed Kahne for the lead on lap 211 and started to pull away from the rest of the field . Bowyer drove to his garage on lap 216 for a transmission change because he lost the use of third gear . Jeff Gordon had closed the gap to Kahne by lap 229 . Green @-@ flag pit stops started six laps later when Kahne made a pit stop from second place . Johnson took on four tires at his stop on lap 239 , handing the lead to Jeff Gordon , who ceded it to Earnhardt two laps later . Martin 's pit crew dropped a lug nut which resulted him remaining stationary for 21 @-@ 7 seconds , while Burton stalled his car which required his crew to push him to the end of pit road . An eighth caution was triggered on lap 242 when Yeley attempted to drive down pit road , and made contact with Martin . He attempted to avoid Yeley by driving left below the driver to escape onto the turn four apron and went airborne . Martin spun and went into the tri @-@ oval wall , and Robby Gordon hit Yeley , causing Gordon to spin into the front stretch grass . Earnhardt made a pit stop on lap 244 , followed by Kahne on the following lap . Edwards gained the lead and maintained it at the lap @-@ 252 restart , followed by Earnhardt and Kahne . Five laps later , Kahne passed Edwards to reclaim the lead as they came across slower cars and began to pull away . Debris was located on the track on lap 276 , necessitating the race 's ninth caution . During the caution , the leaders elected to make pit stops .

Kahne maintained his lead at the lap @-@ 281 restart and pulled away from Earnhardt . Jeff Gordon passed Nemechek to move into fourth place on the following lap . Jeff Gordon 's engine failed after he crossed the start @-@ finish line on lap 302 , triggering the race 's final caution . The leaders , including Kahne , made pit stops for fuel under caution . Johnson led the field at the lap @-@ 307 restart , ahead of Kahne , Earnhardt and Burton . Kahne turned right to the track 's outside and passed Johnson around the inside in turn one for the lead on the 309th lap . Burton ( who felt a vibration from his car ) passed Earnhardt to take over third position seven laps later . Kahne increased his advantage over Johnson during the remaining seventeen laps to win the race

and to become the eighth driver to win both points races at Lowe 's Motor Speedway in a calendar year . Johnson finished second , ahead of Burton in third , Earnhardt in fourth and Bobby Labonte in fifth . Kyle Busch , Raines , Edwards , Nemechek , and Vickers rounded out the top ten finishers . The race had a total of ten cautions and thirty @-@ four lead changes by thirteen different drivers . Kahne led eight times for a total of 134 laps , more than any other competitor . The win was the seventh of Kahne 's Cup Series career , as well as his final of a series @-@ high six victories he posted in the 2006 season .

= = = Post @-@ race = = =

Kahne appeared in victory lane in front of the crowd of 170 @,@ 000 to celebrate his sixth win of the season earning him \$ 305 @,@ 889 . Kahne was delighted with his victory and thanked the people who worked on his car 's transmission and rear @-@ end : " We had a great car . It was unbelievable all night . I slammed it into second gear at the end of pit road one time and I thought I had to break something . This isn 't the special car . This car 's been good two other times this year , but it went to waste . It 's just an awesome team . " Second @-@ place finisher Johnson said he finished the event where he ran in its duration : ? I only made up ten points . But ten points is ten points . ? Third @-@ place finisher Burton was happy he was able to recover from a tire issue from the previous race at Talladega Superspeedway . However , he was upset that he stalled his engine as he felt it cost him the chance of victory . He also said the late @-@ race vibration was enough to scare him and he was glad the race ended because of the amount of shudder coming from his car : " I screamed , ? We ? ve got a wheel loose , we got a wheel loose ? and they said , we do not have a wheel loose , we know we got them tight . "

Shortly after leaving his car , Martin felt the championship was an achievement that he was unable to secure : " They tell me a lot of people are having trouble anyway , but we didn 't need to throw that away , " He said he was unaware that Yeley intended to make a pit stop and , from his viewpoint , it allowed Kenseth to pass him while Yeley was coming from the centre of the track . Yeley said the pit stop was planned and signalled his intentions to Martin for over one mile . He felt Martin placed him in the position to hit the backstretch wall . Hamlin said the first @-@ lap crash that he was involved was part of auto racing , and stated it was problematic being involved in difficulties in the Chase for the Nextel Cup : " We checked up and somebody else ( Waltrip ) didn 't . I put myself back there in qualifying . We 'll take our lumps and go on . " Seventh @-@ place finisher Raines was happy to hold the first position for 28 laps saying it was " extra special " to lead a race at Charlotte . Tom Bowles of Frontstretch opined that had the caution flag not been displayed for the three safety vehicles on lap nine , it could have resulted in causing " one of the most disastrous accidents in NASCAR history . "

Johnson and Burton stated it was difficult to achieve a rhythm because of the small fuel cells mandated for the race and the hard @-@ compound tires . Temperatures had been warmer than the previous day 's Busch Series race and thus gave the drivers more grip though sliding was observed during both events . McMurray noted it was difficult to drive alongside other cars and that other competitors drove cautiously . Kenny Francis , Kahne 's crew chief , stated that he preferred to see longer runs but noted safety had to be taken into consideration . Four days after the race , Penske Racing South were given penalties for Kurt Busch 's car . The penalties , for " actions detrimental to stock car racing " ; " car , car parts , components and / or equipment that do not conform to NASCAR rules " ; and a right rear shock absorber that did not compress , included a \$ 25 @,@ 000 fine and a two race suspension for crew chief Roy McCauley who was placed on probation until December 31 , 2006 . Team owner Roger Penske and Kurt Busch were penalized 50 points in the Owners ' and Drivers ' Championships . The following day , Penske Racing South announced it would not appeal the penalties .

The result kept Burton in the lead of the Drivers ' Championship with 5 @,@ 763 points , ahead of Kenseth on 5 @,@ 718 . Harvick moved into third with 5 @,@ 674 , thirteen points ahead of Martin who fell to fourth . Earnhardt moved in front of Hamlin for fifth , and Johnson , Kahne and Kyle Busch filled positions seven to nine . After the race , Jeff Gordon ( who fell to tenth ) said he would

try and win races to return to contention for the championship . In the Manufacturers ' Championship , Chevrolet maintained the lead with 237 points . Dodge remained in second with 189 , six points ahead of Ford . The race took three hours , forty @-@ seven minutes and twenty @-@ nine seconds to complete , and the margin of victory was 1 @.@ 624 seconds .

= = Results = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

= = = Race results = = =

= = Standings after the race = =