

= 2010 Auto Club 500 =

The 2010 Auto Club 500 was a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race held on February 21 , 2010 at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana , California . Contested over 250 laps , it was the second race of the 2010 Sprint Cup Series season . The race was won by Jimmie Johnson for Hendrick Motorsports . Kevin Harvick finished second and Jeff Burton clinched third .

Polesitter driver Jamie McMurray maintained his lead into the first corner , but outsider Juan Pablo Montoya took the lead before the first lap was over . Afterward , Johnson became the leader , and would eventually lead to the race high of 101 laps . During the final pit stops , Johnson was on pit lane as the caution flag came out . Burton , who led the race during Johnson 's pit stop , did not pass Johnson to put him a lap down . Therefore , Johnson retained the first position upon the completion of pit stops . On the final lap , Harvick was gaining on Johnson , but Johnson maintained his position to win his first race of the season .

There were six caution flags and 28 lead changes among 14 different drivers throughout the course of the race . The result moved Johnson up 23 spots to tenth in the Drivers ' Championship , 78 points behind of leader Kevin Harvick and one ahead of Kyle Busch . Chevrolet maintained its lead in the Manufacturers ' Championship , eight points ahead of Toyota and nine ahead of Ford , with 34 races remaining in the season .

= = Report = =

= = = Background = = =

Auto Club Speedway is one of six superspeedways to hold NASCAR races ; the others are Daytona International Speedway , Michigan International Speedway , Indianapolis Motor Speedway , Pocono Raceway and Talladega Superspeedway . The standard track at Auto Club Speedway is a four @-@ turn superspeedway that is 2 miles ( 3 @.@ 2 km ) long . The track 's turns are banked at fourteen degrees , while the front stretch , the location of the finish line , is banked at eleven degrees . The back stretch has 3 degrees of banking .

Before the race , Jamie McMurray led the Drivers ' Championship with 190 points , and Dale Earnhardt , Jr. stood in second with 175 points . Greg Biffle was third in the Drivers ' Championship with 170 points , Clint Bowyer was fourth with 165 points , and Kevin Harvick was in fifth with 156 points . In the Manufacturers ' Championship , Chevrolet was leading with nine points , three points ahead of their rival Ford . Toyota , with four points , was one point ahead of Dodge in the battle for third .

= = = Practices and qualifying = = =

Three practice sessions were held before the Sunday race ? one on Friday , and two on Saturday . In the first practice session , the fastest drivers were Mark Martin , Ryan Newman , Juan Pablo Montoya , Jeff Burton , and Clint Bowyer . During the second practice session , Jimmie Johnson , Martin , Denny Hamlin , Carl Edwards , and Greg Biffle had the quickest times . Martin , Bowyer , Johnson , McMurray , and Jeff Gordon led the final practice session .

During qualifying , forty @-@ six cars were entered , but only forty @-@ three were able to race because of NASCAR 's qualifying procedure . Jamie McMurray clinched the pole position with a best lap time of 39 @.@ 185 seconds . He was joined on the front row of the grid by Montoya . Bowyer qualified third , Kasey Kahne took fourth , and Dave Blaney started fifth . Casey Mears , Johnny Sauter , and Terry Cook were the three drivers who failed to qualify .

= = = Race summary = = =

The race , the second out of a total of thirty @-@ six in the season , began at 3 p.m. EST and was

televised live in the United States on Fox . Pre @-@ race ceremonies began with Motor Racing Outreach 's Jeff Hamilton giving the invocation ; then Katharine McPhee , season five American Idol runner @-@ up turned RCA Records recording artist , performed the national anthem . Actor Andy García gave the traditional command , " Gentlemen Start Your Engines ! " Before the race , Denny Hamlin moved to the back of the starting grid because his team changed engines after his qualifying run . At 3 : 19 p.m. EST , polesitter Jamie McMurray led the 43 @-@ car field to the green flag , but his lead was short @-@ lived . Juan Pablo Montoya passed him during the first lap to lead lap 1 . On lap 29 , Jimmie Johnson passed Montoya for the lead . Between laps 35 to 40 teams made green flag pit stops ( a pit stop while high speed racing continues ) . Dave Blaney stayed out to lead before parking his car on lap 44 , allowing Johnson to regain the lead .

On lap 57 , the first caution period of the race was called because of debris on the track 's surface . The restart on lap 61 was led by Johnson , but Kevin Harvick passed him for the lead before the lap was over . The second caution flag was waved on lap 92 because Kasey Kahne collided with Montoya . On lap 97 , Johnson brought the field to the green flag . Mark Martin passed Johnson on lap 98 , but was passed back after two laps . Drivers began heading for pit stops on lap 133 . Then , on lap 140 , the third caution came out because Montoya 's engine failed , causing him to collide with the turn one wall . On lap 145 , the green flag waved with Jeff Gordon as the leader .

The fourth caution , caused by the expired engine of Ryan Newman , came out on lap 147 . On the restart , Gordon led the field to the green flag . He did not restart fast enough and was passed by both Jeff Burton and Kyle Busch on lap 154 . On the next lap , Kyle Busch passed Burton for the lead . Ten laps after that , Burton returned the favor by passing Busch for the lead . During the following laps , several drivers made pit stops . The fifth caution flag was waved on lap 192 because light rain was moving through the area ; the leader at the time was Denny Hamlin .

During the restart on lap 199 , Burton brought the field to the green flag . No cautions were called until Brad Keselowski collided with the outside wall in turn four that brought out the sixth caution . The restart was on lap 229 with Jimmie Johnson as the leader . In the ensuing laps , Jimmie Johnson increased his lead over second @-@ placed Kevin Harvick , but with fewer than ten laps to go Harvick began gaining on Johnson . Two laps before the finish , Burton caught up to Harvick and Johnson . Johnson held off both Harvick and Burton to win his first race in 2010 .

== = Post @-@ race == =

Jimmie Johnson appeared in victory lane after his victory lap to start celebrating his first win of the season , his fifth at Auto Club Speedway , and his 48th overall in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series . Following his win , he added , " No way around it , we got lucky . We were able to just beat the 31 car [ leader Jeff Burton ] to the scoring line by about half a car length or we would have been a lap down . "

Although Burton was leading near the end of the race , the caution was issued as Johnson was exiting pit lane . It gave Burton a chance to put Johnson a lap down , but Johnson entered the track ahead of Burton . In the subsequent press conference , Johnson said , " Fortunate came our way . I ? m not going to lie . The fact that we were on pit row gave us track position , and I drove my butt off . " Johnson expressed his enjoyment of winning the race , stating :

" Today was a great race for NASCAR and a great race for this track . I know it got spread out some , but there [ was ] some really good racing from what I saw . Yes , today we got a huge gift . But I was running fourth or fifth at the time [ of the last caution ] , so it 's not like we totally backed into this thing . And I still had to hold Kevin off . "

Burton , who finished third , stated , " We weren 't slowing each other down . I ran the low line and Kevin ran the high line . But I got looser and Kevin got better at the end . The 29 by far had the best car . " Harvick , who finished second , said , " When he moved up I got tight and caught the wall a little bit . If he doesn 't move up , he gets passed pretty easily . He did what he 's supposed to do to take the line away . He did exactly what he had to do . " The race result left Harvick leading the Driver 's Championship with a total of 331 points . Clint Bowyer , who finished third , was second with 312 points , eight ahead of Greg Biffle and ten ahead of Jamie McMurray . Jeff Burton stood in

fifth with 300 points . In the Manufacturers ' Championship , Chevrolet maintained their lead with 18 points . Toyota moved to second with 10 points . Ford followed with 9 points , two points ahead of Dodge in fourth .

= = Race results = =

= = = Qualifying = = =

= = = Race results = = =

= = Standings after the race = =

Note : Only the top five positions are included for both sets of standings .