

Lofton's Competitive Run Ends Early in Martinsville

Justin Lofton and the No. 77 Lofton Cattle Toyota Tundra team knew that they had an extremely competitive truck entering the Kroger 250 event weekend at Martinsville Speedway. Unfortunately, the tight racing quarters on the half-mile short track won out, after contact from a lapped truck ended their charge less than 20 laps into the race.

"It is disappointing for me and all of the guys on this No. 77 Germain Racing team. They built a strong truck. We knew after testing we were going to be a contender this weekend, and we proved that every time we got on track. I can only control how I race people, and it's unfortunate that some lapped trucks don't show a little more respect with the guys that are racing for the top-10," Lofton said.

There were two practice sessions at Martinsville on Friday and at the conclusion of each run, crew chief Ryan "Rudy" Fugle and Lofton proved their pairing was a fast one, with the No. 77 showing in the fourth position both times. The trend continued with qualifying on Saturday after Lofton wheeled his Lofton Cattle Toyota Tundra into the eighth starting spot.

Once under the green flag for the 250-lap race, Lofton maintained the fast pace, racing near the front of the field. On lap 18 however, contact from a lapped truck sent Lofton hard into the turn 3

wall, causing heavy damage to his race truck. The team was forced to make prolonged repairs to the rear end of the No. 77 in the garage area, before sending Lofton back on track on lap 103, over 80 laps down.

Seven laps later, the yellow flag waved with Lofton reporting that the speed was still in the truck, and it was handling okay, despite the damage. At that time, Fugle informed the team that when it was time, they would have to take the truck to the garage area in order to change tires and add fuel, because of the damage to the fuel cell area on the truck.

On lap 137, the yellow, followed by a red flag, waved after a multi-truck wreck. Once the red was lifted, Lofton pulled into the garage for the inevitable fresh tires and fuel.

The second half of the race was uneventful for Lofton. Through the final stretch of the race, his only complaint was that a slight vibration had developed in the front end due to the rubber build-up from the tires. The checkered flag waved on lap 250 with the 25-year-old crossing the stripe in the 32nd position.

"The last half of that race was tough because we still had an extremely fast and competitive truck. I wanted to race with the leaders but the most important thing was to show them respect and finish out the race," Lofton added.

Lofton and the No. 77 team will next hit the track on April 22nd at the Nashville Superspeedway.

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