



No. 11 America's Incredible Pizza Company Racing Chevrolet / Jason Keller Circuit Gilles Villeneuve Post-Race Report

Date: Saturday, August 2, 2008
Event: NAPA Auto Parts 200
Track: Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, Montreal, Quebec
Pole Sitter: Scott Pruett, 102.568 sec.
Keller's Qualifying Position: 23rd, 106.297 sec.
Race Winner: Ron Fellows
Keller's Finishing Position: 23rd



Rain clouds hover over the track in Montreal.
(Credit: Phil Cavali 2008)

Making History in the Rain at Montreal, CJM Racing Finishes 23rd

(August 2, 2008) Montreal, Quebec – It was a weekend of firsts for many people as the NASCAR Nationwide Series headed international for their second road-course race of the season. It was the first time veteran driver Jason Keller had been to the 2.7-mile facility, the first time CJM Racing had visited the track and more importantly the first time NASCAR mandated teams put on rain tires and race in the rain. History was made as the NAPA Auto Parts 200 marked the first ever NASCAR race run in the rain.

Jason Keller found himself in a very unique position as he entered Montreal Friday morning. The all-time record holder for career starts in the Nationwide Series would be carrying rookie stripes on his America's Incredible Pizza Company Chevrolet. Keller immediately arranged for some laps around the road-course in the series pace car and spent some time talking to drivers that have raced there in the past. Armed with valuable information, Keller patiently waited for the practice sessions to get underway.

In the very first practice session, Keller took some time to familiarize himself with the layout of the track. He quickly realized that this road-course was very different than Mexico City and Watkins Glen. "The track is very narrow and I'm not use to that. We've also go to be very careful about tire wear here. Looks like conserving the brakes is going to be key," Keller remarked.

As the first practice came to a close, the No. 11 America's Incredible Pizza Company Chevrolet posted the 25th quickest time with a speed of 91.421 mph, 106.676 mph. A second practice followed filled with on-track melee, Keller was only able to run nine laps and posted the 24th quickest time at 90.950 mph, 107.228 mph.

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Saturday morning brought with it a whole lot of unknown's. Weather was a big concern and the question on everyone's mind was would NASCAR run the NAPA Auto Parts 200 in the rain. First the teams' needed to qualify and see how the field would line up. Under sunny skies, Keller went out for two laps and placed the America's Incredible Pizza Company Chevrolet mid-pack in the 23rd spot.

As the day continued the black skies began to move in over the track. The race started without any rain but that situation quickly changed when drivers began to report in rain drops on lap five. The drops soon turned into a full-course rain storm and the cars were brought down pit road for a mandatory pit stop. NASCAR announced that all 43-teams must put on rain tires before they could resume the race.

The race restarted on lap 13 and Keller was credited with the 27th starting position in the historic event. It took only two laps to realize just how challenging the remaining laps would be as Keller radioed in, "I'm spinning the tires and trying not to rev it up right now." Shortly after he then reported in, "I can't see. There is oil and dirt all over my windshield."

Crew chief Todd Gordon would bring the No. 11 America's Incredible Pizza Company Chevrolet down pit road a total of three times to clean the windshield. It was only on the final stop on lap 40 that the crew went ahead and put four new rain tires on the race car.

The America's Incredible Pizza Company Chevrolet was running in the 23rd position when the skies really opened up and visibility out on the race track became impossible. As the teams relayed to NASCAR the concern for the safety of the drivers a caution flag flew. Five laps later the rain continued to fall hard and the cars were brought down pit road for a red flag. The NAPA Auto Parts 200 was officially called off on lap 48 and race leader Ron Fellows was credited with the win.

"There was zero visibility out there. My windshield kept fogging up on me and it made it impossible to get into the corners. Then the rain started to fall harder and puddles accumulated on the race track making it that much tougher to drive. NASCAR did the right thing by ending it when they did," Keller stated.

The Nationwide Series will head to their last road-course race event next weekend at Watkins Glen International. The Zippo 200 is scheduled to air live on ABC at 2:30 pm (EST).

Race Results:

1. Ron Fellows
2. Patrick Carpentier
3. Marcos Ambrose
4. Ron Hornaday
5. Boris Said
- 23. Jason Keller**

NNS Driver Points Standings:

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|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Clint Bowyer | 3354 | |
| 2. Carl Edwards | 3186 | -168 |
| 3. Brad Keselowski | 3170 | -184 |
| 4. David Reutimann | 3035 | -319 |
| 5. David Ragan | 3009 | -345 |
| 10. Jason Keller | 2628 | -726 |