Motorsports

Keselowski on pole for NASCAR's stop in Vegas

By MIKE CRANSTON
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Brad Keselowski will begin his bid for a third victory in the past four NASCAR Cup races at Las Vegas Motor Speedway from the pole after topping qualifying Friday night.

Keselowski, who also won last week's race at Atlanta, made up ground in the final two turns and posted a top seed of 193.68 mph in his No. 2 Ford for his 13th career pole. He won at the 1.5-mile track last year and in 2014.

Keselowski

"We found some things we really liked here about three or four years ago and we've been able to kind of roll with that," Keselowski said.

Martin Truex Jr., who was the fastest in the midday practice, will join him on the front row Sunday in the 400-mile race thanks to a speed of 193.458 mph in his No. 78 Toyota.

"We were really strong in practice and thought it would pick up quite a bit of speed tonight and it really didn't," Truex said. "So that threw us for a little bit of a curve and kind of hurt our setup. But it was a good recovery. We made a lot of changes throughout qualifying and got better at the end."

Ryan Blaney will start third in his Ford, and Matt Kenseth qualified fourth on his 45th birthday.

Kyle Larson was fifth, followed by Joey Logano, Kasey Kahne, rookie Erik Jones, Las Vegas native Kyle Busch and Jamie McMurray.

Daniel Suarez will start 11th and Chase Elliott 12th.

Keselowski believes the new stage racing format this season has boosted qualifying's importance in the race weekend. The first segment Sunday ends on the 45th lap.

"Now it matters more than ever because it gives you a prime opportunity to win that first stage and collect those points both for the season and for the playoffs," Keselowski said.

Daytona 500 champion Kurt Busch failed to get out of the second qualifying round and will start 17th. His Stewart-Haas Racing teammate and series points leader Kevin Harvick struggled and will being 19th.

Clint Bowyer (13th) just missed getting into the last round. Defending series champion Jimmie Johnson will start 16th and teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. 18th.

Kyle Busch was the fastest in the first qualifying round and Danica Patrick (28th) was among those outside the top 25 who failed to advance. AJ Allmendinger knocked out his teammate Chris Buescher by posting a faster lap seconds before the 20-minute session ended

"I thought AJ and I were better friends than that," joked Buescher, who will start 25th.

With only 39 cars entered, open drivers Corey LaJoie (34th), Derrike Cope (38th) and Timmy Hill (39th) all made the field.

Kobalt 400

- Sunday, 12:30 p.m.
- TV: FOX
- Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Starting Top-10

1. Brad Keselowski (2)
2. Martin Truex, Jr. (78)
3. Ryan Blaney (21)
4. Matt Kenseth (20)
5. Kyle Larson (42)
6. Joey Logano (22)
7. Kasey Kahne (5)
8. Erik Jones (77)
9. Kyle Busch (18)
10. Jamie McMurray (1)

Men's College Basketball

Oregon marches into Pac-12 title game

Ducks will face Arizona tonight for Pac-12 title

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Oregon guard Dillon Brooks headed to the bench two minutes into the second half due to foul trouble. Most teams would take a step back without their leading scorer.

The deep, talented Ducks flew forward instead.

Tyler Dorsey had 23 points, Dylan Ennis scored on a key three-point play with 22 seconds left, and No. 5 Oregon outlasted California 73-65 Friday night in the Pac-12 Tournament semifinals.

"Everybody has to pick it up and pick up their role," Dorsey said. "That's what we did tonight. We can't control how the refs are going to call it and they called a couple on Dillon early, and everybody had to pick up."

Top-seeded Oregon (29-4) played most of the second half without Brooks due to foul trouble, but increased its lead behind a rash of blocked shots and transition baskets.

Jordan Bell controlled the inside, finishing with 15 rebounds and five of Oregon's seven blocked shots. Dorsey and Ennis (16 points) picked up the scoring slack.

Now the Ducks are headed to the Pac-12 title game for the third straight year, facing the winner between No. 3 UCLA and No. 7 Arizona on Saturday night.

"We would like to win the conference tournament," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "Whatever implications those have on our seeding, I don't know."

California (21-12) lost leading scorer Jabari Bird 64 seconds into the game to a head injury after a hard fall, yet held its own with the Ducks.

The fifth-seeded Bears pulled within two in the final minute, but Ennis scored on a hard drive and hit the free throw to put the Ducks up 70-65.

Grant Mullins led Cal with 23 points and Charlie Moore added 15. Bird was at the hospital being evaluated.

AP Photo/John Locher

Oregon's Chris Boucher reacts after scoring against California during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in the semifinals of the Pac-12 tournament Friday, March 10, 2017, in Las Vegas.

"I thought they did a great job competing, but that's what we're supposed to do," Cal coach Cuonzo Martin said. "That's part of our program, so that part should be understood."

Cal took a couple of steps toward earning an at-large NCAA Tournament bid by beating Oregon State and Utah to open the Pac-12 Tournament after closing the regular season with five losses in six games.

Beating a top-five team would have been a huge boost, but it faced long odds coming into the night after losing twice to Oregon during the regular season.

Cal got a tough break barely a minute into Saturday's game, when Bird went down hard. He had to be helped to the locker room while holding a towel to the right side of his head.

But the injury and a quiet start by forward Ivan Raab did little to slow the Bears. They attacked the Ducks at both ends, leading for a good portion of the first half behind Moore and Mullins, who combined for 21 points.

Pac-12 Semifinal

California	#5 Oregon
65	73

"I didn't know what was going on," Raab said of Bird's injury. "We didn't really have time to really think about it. Guys stepped up and they played hard, and it is what it is."

Oregon turned up the defensive pressure late in the half, holding Cal without a field goal over the final 4:38 to build a 36-33 halftime lead.

Oregon opened the second half by getting into quick foul trouble. The Ducks had six in the opening 2 1/2 minutes — five on one possession — and Brooks had to go to the bench after picking up his fourth.

Despite the fouls, Oregon increased its lead, going up 49-37 after a 9-0 run.

Cal clawed back, whittling the lead down to 64-61 with 3 1/2 minutes left behind a little defense of its own, but couldn't finish it off.

BIG PICTURE

California kept battling after Bird went down and has given itself at least shot at getting an NCAA Tournament nod on selection Sunday.

"I think we're an NCAA Tournament team," Martin said. "Now it's for them to decide."

Oregon did not exactly play pretty, but found a way, earning a trip to the Pac-12 title game for third straight season.

BLOCKING DUCKS

Oregon reached 223 blocked shots for the season, breaking the school record for the fourth time in the past five seasons. The Ducks are one short of the Pac-12 record set by Washington last season.

UP NEXT

California must await word on its postseason fate.

Oregon will play No. 7 Arizona in Saturday's championship game. Tip-off is set for 8 p.m. and the game will be televised on ESPN.

EASTERN OREGON FORUM *Presents*

TUESDAY, MARCH 21ST, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.
BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BMCC), 2411 NW CARDEN, PENDLETON, OR,
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY BUILDING, ROOM ST-200

FROM FIELD TO FROTH FEATURING: CRAIG COLEMAN, JEAN-LUKE ALEXANDER & RODNEY BULLINGTON

THE COST IS FREE TO MEMBERS AND STUDENTS; FOR ALL OTHERS THE COST IS $6.00 AT THE DOOR.

Craig Coleman grew up in a farming family. He has farmed for over 30 years in the Willamette Valley, and then later in Eastern Oregon (Hermiston) where he currently lives. A serial entrepreneur, Coleman enjoys starting new projects and watching them take flight into successful ventures. His latest, Ordnance Brewing which he manages, recently has grown from a small scale brewery, to one that has a 50 bbl. brewing system. Ordnance's beer can be found in Oregon and Washington and soon will be found in Montana, Alaska, Idaho and surrounding states. So what is next? Well, Ordnance Distilling and Ordnance Cider of course! When not on the farm, or at the brewery, Coleman can be found checking up on Neighbor Dudes, an affiliated taproom in Hermiston or going to sporting events with his family.

Jean-Luke Alexander has been the Head Brewer at Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub in Pendleton Oregon since 2015. Jean-Luke graduated from Oregon State University in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science in Food Science/ Fermentation Science, and he also holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Marketing. Before coming to Prodigal Son, Jean-Luke was a brewer at Bridgeport Brewing Company in Portland Oregon, a malt house operator at Great Western Malting in Vancouver Washington, and had early experience as a brewery intern at Bridgeport Brewing, Deschutes Brewery in Bend Oregon, and McMenamins in Corvallis Oregon.

Jean-Luke and his wife Alyssa moved to Pendleton in 2015, and they attempt to keep up with their two boys, Murray and Keaton.

Rodney Bullington is a native of the Pacific Northwest and grew up in agricultural towns in Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington. Over the past 21 years of his professional career Rodney has provided project management and leadership for ESPN.com, Walt Disney Internet Group, Microsoft Xbox Games Studios, and Pop Cap games. Rodney moved back home to Pendleton Oregon with his wife Kelli and son Truman. Rodney started his career with Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc. in 2012 where he was responsible for PGG's IT, Safety, and Facilities (Infrastructure) teams and for the past two years McKennon Seed Plant. In 2015 Rodney and his wife Kelli purchased the Comrie's Cadillac and Oldsmobile dealership building on the eastside of Pendleton with a vision for Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery and on November 19, 2016 that vision became a reality when it opened its doors. With a focus on agriculture and Eastern Oregon growers and produce they have partnered with Cliff and Judy Bracher to bring Pendleton and the surrounding areas quality craft distilled spirits.

For more information about the EO Forum, please contact: Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

The EO Forum is a collaborative effort among leaders from Blue Mountain Community College, InterMountain Education Service District; the East Oregonian; American Association of University Women; and Harriet Isom; a former United States ambassador who also serves on the committee. This EO Forum program Is offered as part of Blue Mountain Community College's annual Arts and Culture Festival. For more information on the festival go to www.bluecc.edu.