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A PAIR OF CAREER FIRSTS FOR JOHN WES TOWNLEY AT BRISTOL

Bristol, TN (3/22/09) – Raybestos Rookie of the Year contender, John Wes Townley made his first NASCAR Nationwide Series start at Bristol Motor Speedway this weekend bringing home his career first top-20; finishing 16th in the Scott’s Turf Builder 300 on Saturday.

The Watkinsville, Ga. native recorded his best qualifying effort in 11 attempts in the Nationwide Series Saturday morning posting the 12th fastest lap of the session. Townley clocked in at 15.479 seconds, touring the “World’s Fastest Half Mile” at 123.961 mph.

The 43-car field took the green flag just past 2:30 p.m. ET before an estimated crowd of 101,000. Townley began to lose positions early on due to tight handling conditions, and settled with a solid run in the top-20 before making his first pit stop during the afternoon’s fourth caution on lap 89.

Crew Chief, Brad Parrott called for four tires, fuel, an air pressure adjustment and track bar adjustment to help with the tight handling conditions. However, due to the tight pit road environment the Zaxby’s Racing Crew had trouble during the stop and was only able to change two left-side tires. The No. 09 machine would be forced to come back down pit road one lap later for right side tires and settle for a 23rd place restart on lap 92.

When the afternoon’s fifth caution flag was waved on lap 138 for an accident in turn 2, Townley was scored in the 23rd position, one lap down to leader Carl Edwards. Parrott continued with aggressive adjustments to help free the car and called for four tires, fuel and three rounds up on the track-bar. The Zaxby’s Ford Fusion would restart 22nd when racing resumed on lap 142.

Over the next 40 laps Townley would work his way into position as the first driver one lap down, putting him in contention to receive the “Lucky Dog” pass, which would return him to the lead lap. A pit stop under caution on lap 188 allowed his team to put tires on and make another track bar and air pressure adjustment.

Townley restarted 20th and began his climb towards the front; gaining four positions on track but losing a lap once again to the leader. Hard work and smart racing put Townley back in contention for the “Lucky Dog” and on lap 254 when the yellow flag was displayed for an accident in turn 4, Townley was the recipient.

Brad Parrott called for Townley to bring his Zaxby’s Ford Fusion down pit road for a spring rubber adjustment, four tires and fuel. The No. 09 machine would restart in the 16th position.

Just four laps later the yellow waved for the 10th and final time on lap 263 for a six car pile-up that consumed the Zaxby’s Ford. With left side damage, Brad Parrott was forced to bring Townley down pit road

four times during an 11-lap caution period to pull the fenders out, bare bond the left side and take four tires. Townley's Ford would restart 17th, the last car on the lead lap, when racing resumed on lap 273.

In the final 27 laps Townley would gain one spot on track, but lose a lap to leader Kevin Harvick. The 19-year-old rookie would finish the 300-lap event in the 16th position one lap down.

Townley was the third highest finishing Raybestos Rookie of the Year contender; closing the gap to fifth place by just one point. Townley's top-20 effort also advanced his position in the 2009 Owners points by four to 37th.

The NASCAR Nationwide Series will take a week off before heading to Texas Motor Speedway for the O'Reilly 300 on April 4th. John Wes Townley and RAB Racing will be making their NASCAR Nationwide Series debut at the 1.5-mile quad-oval.

For more information on RAB Racing log onto www.teamrab.com
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