

Kurt Busch took his million dollar payday from his last week's all star race victory, let it ride, and cashed in with his first career Charlotte Motor Speedway victory in Sunday night's Coca Cola 600.

In a familiar sight, it was cars owned by famed Indianapolis 500 veterans Roger Penske and Chip Ganassi duking it out for a Sprint Cup victory just hours after the two owners battled for supremacy in the Indianapolis 500.

While Ganassi's driver Dario Franchitti took the honors at Indy, it was Penske's car in Victory Lane at Charlotte.

Busch beat out a hard-charging Jamie McMurray to chalk up his second win of the season and the 22nd of his career, becoming the seventh driver to pull off

and holding off McMurray over the final 19 laps.

"McMurray kept us honest," said Kurt Busch. "He was right there at the end. It wasn't like we faded back into the pack; he just separated himself from the pack to come and get us. He taught me a couple things about my line. I needed to adjust it. It helped us stay out in front of him at the end."

Both drivers had big incentives to give their car owner's a Coca Cola 600 victory.

For McMurray, it was a run at history – no car owner had ever won both Indy and Charlotte in the same day. For Busch, it was to give redemption to Penske, who saw all three of his drivers

pit – while McMurray came around the outside of Gordon to take second.

From there, the race as on, with McMurray slowly chipping away at Kurt Busch's lead.

McMurray began to close the gap in the final laps, but ran out of time as Kurt Busch crossed the finish line by .737 seconds.

It was McMurray's second runner-up finish in the last three races and his best finish at Charlotte since winning his first career Sprint Cup victory in just his second start back in October of 2003.

"It's unfortunate that the caution came out," said McMurray. "The car had so much speed in it that I was only having to drive about 90%, I was still able to run a 10th and a half or so quicker. The car just had really good speed in it tonight.

"I knew whoever came out ahead on that last pit stop between Kurt and I, if somebody didn't screw up, that would be the race winner. It would take me too many laps to run Kurt down. You get within 10 or 12 car lengths, you stall out. I just didn't have enough time in the end.

For Kyle Busch, it was another night filled with fireworks, and not the ones in Victory Lane.

One week after tangling with teammate Denny Hamlin in the All Star race and trading barbs in the media all week, Busch looked to repeat his come-from-behind performance in Saturday's Nationwide Series race, rebounding from a pit road collision and a speeding penalty to put himself in contention for the win late in the race.



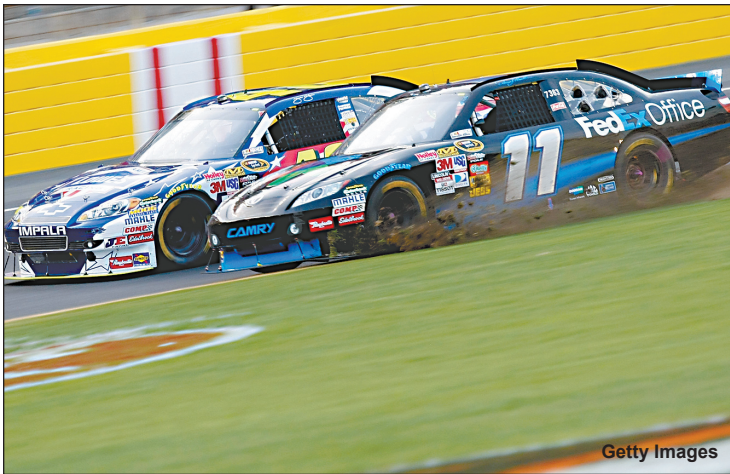
Rhonda McCole

But when he starts affecting me with his aggressiveness, I just will not put up with it. I've been around here long enough. I just will not tolerate it."

Kyle, for his part, had his own take on who was to blame for the three-wide scrum.

"After the race (Burton) was just real mad at me," said Busch. "He said I didn't race him with enough respect, if I'm not going to give him respect, he's not going to show me any.

"I said, Look, man, last restart of the



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the two week sweep.

"Roger, this one is for you," said Kurt Busch in a salute to his venerable car owner. "I thought about that Ganassi car behind me. He hasn't going to get by me.

"This has been a dream come true, to be able to wrap up this special weekend, to put a bow on it with this Coca-Cola 600 win. It's a prestigious race, a tough race, and most of all it's a team race. This was a race for the ages too. Things fell into our hands, especially at the end."

Kyle Busch came home third, followed by Mark Martin and David Reutimann.

Kurt Busch dominated the race, leading 252 of the 400 laps, taking the lead from Jeff Gordon on a restart following the final round of pit stops on lap 378

stumble in the Indy 500 earlier in the day.

"I'm happy to race for him and bring him home wins, especially on a day like today when he didn't get it at Indy and we beat a Ganassi car today to win it," said Kurt Busch. "That's something special. To do it for Roger, to beat Ganassi, that's what it's all about."

McMurray was in Kurt Busch's mirror all night, swapping the lead at least four times through the last half of the race.

McMurray was leading as the field came to pit road during the eighth and final caution with 22 laps to go, but ended up coming out third behind Kurt Busch and Matt Kenseth.

On the restart, Kurt Busch quickly blasted past Jeff Gordon – who did not



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On the final restart, Kyle Busch came flying through the field with a three-wide maneuver resulted in contact with Jeff Burton, sending Burton to the pits with a cut tire.

After the checkered flag, Burton came to Kyle Busch's car to make his displeasure with Kyle Busch's aggressive driving known.

"Kyle (Busch) made it three-wide on the restart because the guys on the bottom didn't have the tires and he's trying to make something happen, which I don't have a problem with," Burton said later. "So he runs into me and cuts my tire down, then I have a problem with it.

"He's real aggressive, that's cool.

race. You have to go, make some bold moves. It wasn't me that made it three-wide - it was your teammate (Clint Bowyer). Have a chat with him. I would be more than happy to sit with Jeff Burton and talk with him about it and for him to point out on a replay to me."

Defending series champion Jimmie Johnson continued to struggle after posting two DNF's in the last five races.

Johnson, a perennial favorite at Charlotte, pounded the wall on lap 274 and spent over 50 laps in the garage getting repaired, ending up finishing 37th.

Story by Pete McCole

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