

NewsFlash from The Joie of Seating

McDowell OK (protected by Seat by The Joie of Seating) After Near Head-On Crash in NASCAR Qualifying

Impact bent Turn 1 wall, forced 72-minute delay in repairs
By Mark Aumann, NASCAR.COM
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FORT WORTH, Texas -- On Monday, Michael McDowell had a long talk with Jeff Burton about driver etiquette. After walking away from a wild crash during Friday's Sprint Cup qualifying at Texas Motor Speedway, the next conversation between the two may be about safety, something that's near and dear to Burton's heart.

Heading into Turn 1 on his second qualifying lap, McDowell's No. 00 Toyota twitched, then shot up the track as he tried to catch the spin. The rookie **slammed nearly head-on into the SAFER barrier, then spun upside down for several hundred yards before the car began a series of at least eight barrel rolls,** coming to rest right-side up on the backstretch.

McDowell was able to exit the car under his own power and walk away from his destroyed racer, which touched off a roar from the crowd. He was the second car on the track after David Gilliland's No. 38 Ford had engine problems on his run, forcing crews to lay down absorbent material during their cleanup efforts.



"I came off of [Turn 4] on that last lap and it just felt a little bit off," McDowell said. "I went down into [Turn] 1 and I don't know if it was the oil dry or something happened, but it was real unfortunate for those guys. I hate to make a lot of work for the guys back in the shop.

"That's one of the worst wrecks I've seen, for sure, in a while and I'm not excited I had to participate in it."

Seeing the accident on television replay, McDowell himself seemed awed and impressed by his escape -- and used the word "mad" to describe his emotions while the crash was unfolding.

"I told the guys, 'Man, this thing feels really tight. I'm going to run another lap,'" he said. "Then I got down in there and it just started to pull right on me. I tried to gather it up and as soon as I turned back to the right, the front tires hooked up and it started rolling down from there. I didn't lose consciousness, so I felt every roll down the hill.

"I thank the guys back in the shop. They make these cars extremely safe. They spend the extra time padding everything. For me to walk away from that wreck, right there, is unbelievable."

Tony Stewart was watching replays of the incident on the speedway's video screens.

"I'm real curious to see the data that they logged from that," Stewart said. **"Because, live, that was the hardest hit I've ever seen anybody take.** That was a pretty impressive crash. It was

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just good to see him get out and walk around. That makes you look at what NASCAR's done and say that they're doing a good job of doing what they're doing with the [new car] and the SAFER barriers.

"We've got a lot of people to thank today because of the hard work and the hours that we all don't know about, to take an accident like that and watch him get out and walk to the ambulance."

Qualifying was delayed for 72 minutes as NASCAR president Mike Helton, Sprint Cup director John Darby and track crews assessed the damage to the steel barrier, which was bowed heavily by the impact. Temporary repairs, including welding quarter-inch L-plating to the exposed ends of the damaged barrier, were completed. Track crews planned to replace approximately 20 feet following the completion of the day's activities.

McDowell made his Sprint Cup debut last week at Martinsville and finished 26th after a late-race incident with Jamie McMurray cost him two laps (read more). McDowell made his Nationwide Series debut at Fort Worth last season, starting 17th and finishing 20th.

NOTE: Content Courtesy of NASCAR.com