By JENNA FRYER

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CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Four-time NASCAR champion Jeff Gordon avoided suspension Monday when NASCAR instead fined him $100,000 and docked him 25 points for intentionally wrecking Clint Bowyer at Phoenix International Raceway.

Gordon also was placed on probation through Dec. 31. But he'll be allowed to close out the season at Homestead-Miami Speedway despite his actions in Sunday's race, which triggered a fight in the garage area between the two drivers' crews.

"I take responsibility for my actions on the racetrack," Gordon said in a statement. "I accept NASCAR's decision and look forward to ending the season on a high note at Homestead."

The penalty drops Gordon to 11th in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship with one race remaining. He's now four points behind Martin Truex Jr. for 10th, and only the top-10 drivers have formal roles in the season-ending awards ceremony in Las Vegas.

Rick Hendrick also was docked 25 car owner points, and crew chief Alan Gustafson was placed on probation through the end of the year.

"I've always respected Jeff for standing his ground," said Hendrick, owner of Hendrick Motorsports. "We also respect that NASCAR needs to police the sport and send a message

when situations like this occur. It's been a great year, and we're going to put our focus on finishing in a positive way this weekend."

Gordon intentionally slowed his car and waited for Bowyer on the track Sunday to wreck him on what was scheduled to be the final lap. There had been contact between the two a few laps earlier, and Gordon viewed it as the final straw in an apparently escalating on-track feud with Bowyer.

He said after the incident he was "fed up" with Bowyer, and had to take a stand Sunday and would wait to see how NASCAR responded.

"They've got to do what they've got to do, and I guess I had to do what I had to do," he said.

The accident collected Joey Logano and Aric Almirola, and happened right in front of championship contender Brad Keselowski, who had to weave his way around the carnage.

It also led to the brawl in the garage that began when Gordon appeared to be jumped from behind by a Michael Waltrip Racing team member. Gordon was grabbed by a Hendrick Motorsports crew member and pulled out of the fracas and into his team hauler.

Bowyer, bewildered to find his stall empty when his burning race car came to a stop on pit road, saw the fight on the infield big screen and sprinted over the wall and through the garage to back up his guys. He was held back by NASCAR officials from entering Gordon's hauler.

Bowyer crew chief Brian Pattie was fined $25,000 and placed on probation through the end of the year for failing to maintain control of the crew.

NASCAR vice president of competition Robin Pemberton considered the matter closed after issuing the penalties.

“There’s no doubt that a unique set of circumstances combined with a championship battle on the line resulted in raw emotions coming into play,” he said. “We consider the penalties appropriate and those involved understand our decision and we expect them to abide by them.”

And Michael Waltrip Racing apologized for the actions of its crew members, which said they did not live up to the standards it has set for its race team but was sparked because the accident “brought raw emotions of a long and hard championship battle to the surface.”

Bowyer could have climbed back into the championship battle on Sunday, but Gordon’s actions instead dropped him to fourth in the standings and mathematically eliminated him from title contention.

Meanwhile, Keselowski was fined $25,000 and placed on probation for having an electronic device inside the car — the phone he used to tweet during a red flag period caused by Gordon wrecking Bowyer.

Keselowski first tweeted during a red flag at the season-opening Daytona 500, and he was widely celebrated for his social media usage. He posted his view of the jet fuel fire that stopped the race for over two hours, answered questions and gave updates during the first prime-time Daytona 500 in history.

But NASCAR later told teams they could not have electronic devices in their cars, even though Keselowski has tweeted without penalty from Victory Lane at Bristol and from inside his car during a rain delay at Richmond since Daytona. It had some fans wondering Monday if he was really being penalized for a profanity-laced answer he gave during Sunday’s post-race news conference about the race.

Keselowski was upset about what he believed was a double standard from drivers who had been critical a week earlier of how aggressive he had raced Jimmie Johnson on a pair of restarts at Texas. He argued with colorful language that it didn’t come close to the Gordon-Bowyer incident on Sunday, or the last-lap crash that occurred because NASCAR failed to throw a caution despite oil on the track.

“It’s the double standard that I spent a whole week being bashed by a half-dozen drivers about racing hard at Texas and how I’m out of control and have a death wish,” he said. “These guys just tried to kill each other ... they should be ashamed. It’s embarrassing.”

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