

### Max Papis Claims First Top-10 Finish of 2011 Season at Martinsville

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (April 3, 2011) – Every driver has certain tracks that he circles on the schedule, knowing that with his past experience, the race can be a highlight reel of good runs. For Max Papis, one of those tracks circled in red is Martinsville Speedway. The Como, Italy native has raced at the Virginia short track four times prior to Saturday's Kroger 250 – three times in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and once in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – recording his second career Truck Series top-10 finish the last time Papis visited Martinsville.

After two successful practice sessions on Friday afternoon, Papis took to the track for his qualifying run under sunny skies on Saturday morning. Papis clocked a lap of 20.212 seconds, placing the No. 9 GEICO Toyota Tundra in the 11th starting position. As the winds picked up, the green flag waved on the 250-lap race and the bumpin' and bangin' started early. Papis quickly reported to Crew Chief Randy Goss that his Toyota was tight in the center of the corners. When the first caution was displayed on lap 19, Papis came to the attention of his pit crew for a track bar adjustment and for the rear bumper bar to be cut off as it was flapping from contact in the beginning laps.

Because of the varying pit strategies that each team used throughout the race, Papis was forced to restart on lap 23 from the 31st position. Patience became the name of the game for the GEICO Racing driver as Papis carefully made his way back towards the front. In just six laps, the No. 9 Germain Racing entry was inside the top-25 and by lap 40, Papis had driven his

way into 20th-place. The third caution slowed the pace on lap 57 as Papis radioed to Goss that his truck was free on entry and continued to be tight in the center of the corner. The Italian driver came down pit road once again for four fresh tires, Sunoco fuel, and one round down on the track bar.

Due to the changing strategies that continued up and down pit road, Papis restarted on lap 62 from the 22nd position and began his trek to the front once again. In a handful of laps, Papis had returned to the top-15 and wasn't looking back. A wreck occurred directly in front of Papis on lap 73 and he did a phenomenal job of dodging the spinning trucks, while moving into 13th-place. With help from Spotter Jason Jarrett, Goss made the decision to stay out on the track as no damage occurred. As the majority of the leaders made their pit stop, Papis restarted on lap 78 from the fourth position.

Ten laps passed and Papis battled with defending Truck Series Champion Ron Hornaday, while continuing to run in the top-four. As the next yellow flag waved on lap 89, Papis was then stuck on the outside lane for the restart at a track where the inside lane is the preferred groove. The GEICO Toyota lost a few positions on the restart but Mad Max was on a mission and regained the spots and found himself in the sixth position by lap 137. Goss brought Papis to the attention of his pit crew for the final time of the event for four tires, fuel, and an air pressure adjustment.

Restarting on lap 144, Papis was ready to attack and move back inside the top-10, where he had run the greater part of the race. In a short 30 laps, the GEICO Toyota Tundra had moved into the top-five and was in position to pounce on an opportunity. That chance presented itself on lap 176 as another caution flew and the trucks in front of Papis came to pit road, placing the No. 9 in second-place. Papis challenged Austin Dillon for the lead over a 10-lap period before another caution flag waved, forcing the driver to restart on the outside lane once again. The final three cautions in the last 50 laps dealt Papis with restarting on the outside each time as the intensity picked up. On lap 250, Papis crossed the finish line and took the checkered flag in the

10th position. This was Papis' second top-10 finish at Martinsville Speedway and third overall in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series.

"I feel today was one of my best NASCAR races since I started," said Papis after the race. "My GEICO Racing team and I fought hard on the track and in the pits all race long and I am very proud of the effort. I got caught on the outside lane a lot of times. It killed our momentum and hurt us with the marbles up on the top of the track, but we never gave up and kept fighting. We, as a team, are getting better and it feels great to get a top-10 finish."

After this strong performance by Papis and the entire GEICO Racing team, Papis remains in the ninth position in the point standings, only one point behind eighth-place Todd Bodine. The NASCAR Camping World Truck Series will take a two-week break before returning to action at Nashville (Tenn.) Superspeedway on Friday, April 22nd.

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*Contact: Samantha Jones, Player Management International*

*Email: [sjones@pmifirm.com](mailto:sjones@pmifirm.com) Web Site: [www.pmifirm.com](http://www.pmifirm.com)*

