

## RICHMOND TURNS ITS BACK ON MEARS; LOOKING FORWARD TO A DANCE WITH THE LADY IN BLACK

Richmond, VA (April 30, 2011) – After a weekend off, an energetic Casey Mears was eager to arrive in Richmond, VA, to continue his assault on the Top 35. First, however, he would make a pit stop at GEICO's corporate office in Washington, DC, to visit with GEICO associates.

Aside from the normal autographs and photo opportunities, Mears took on GEICO's best video game players in the NASCAR Wii game.

He prevailed, although it wasn't without a challenge.

Fortunately, driving a real racecar comes easier for Mears, so he wasted little time in getting started when the team unloaded the #13 GEICO Toyota Camry on Friday at Richmond International Raceway. While the first practice session saw Mears end up 39th on the speed chart, final practice showed vast improvement and the #13 GEICO Camry was 19th on the board when the session closed.

When NASCAR Sprint Cup Series qualifying got underway beneath the Richmond sunset on Friday evening, Mears was the 14th car to take to the track. He immediately jumped to 5th after navigating the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile D-shaped oval in just 21.184 seconds, at a rate of speed of 127.455 miles per hour. As cloud cover blanketed the raceway, times picked up and Mears would land 15th on Saturday night's starting grid.

Perfect weather welcomed the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series to the track for some Saturday night racing under the lights. A big crowd was on-hand when the green flag turned the field loose for 400-laps of racing.

Starting 15th, Mears quickly moved the #13 GEICO Camry into the 12th position by the close of the event's second lap. He ran solidly in the Top 15 before Lap 14 heard him reporting to crew chief, Bootie Barker, that his GEICO Camry was "Tight in the center and loose off."

Thus beginning an evening long battle that would slowly send Mears backwards through the field.

Mears continued to battle an ill-handling racecar until a scheduled green flag pit stop on Lap 84 allowed the #13 GEICO Camry to visit pit road. Upon arrival in the GEICO pit stall, Mears was provided with four fresh tires, a tank of fuel and adjustments.

Although he entered pit road in the 33rd position, the Germain Racing pit crew completed their work quickly and returned Mears to the racing surface one position to the good, in 32nd.

The adjustments seemed to work and Mears' lap times picked up until the caution flag was displayed on Lap 107 for debris on the racetrack. Mears radioed to Barker: "I finally have some rear grip. My entry and exit are way better." He would bring his #13 GEICO Camry down pit road during the caution and the Germain Racing pit crew would once again respond in a prompt manner.

After hitting pit road in the 32nd position, he exited in 30th, netting two positions during his visit.

Mears quickly moved into 29th and found himself flanked by Kurt Busch in 28th and Jimmie Johnson in 30th. Unfortunately, he would once again find himself battling an ill-handling racecar.

While Mears was busy fighting his racecar, his evening took yet another turn when Bobby Labonte spun his tires on the Lap 265 re-start, causing the cars behind Mears to make contact with his #13 GEICO Camry. The contact sent Mears into a spin between turns one and two, but he made an amazing save and sustained very little, if any, damage to his racecar.

The incident sent Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry back to the 36th position.

Mears' evening would not get any easier and after 300-miles of racing, the checkered flag waved over a very long night. Despite the adversity presented him, Mears managed to hustle back and record a 28th place finish under the Richmond night sky.

“We had a tough night, but rather than quit, we kept working on our #13 GEICO Camry and tried to make it better,” Mears said. “The pit crew did a great job and helped me stay competitive. Racing will humble you from time to time and tonight was one of those times.

We will put this race behind us quickly and get focused on Darlington.”

Next week will find the Germain Racing team traveling just a short distance to the legendary 1.366-mile oval of Darlington Raceway for the Sprint Cup Series’ 10th race of the 2011 season.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Toyota Camry will hit the track ‘Too Tough To Tame’ for the opening practice session at 11:30 AM (EDT) on Friday, May 6th. Qualifying will follow at 5:10 PM (EDT).

The Showtime Southern 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Saturday, May 7th, and it will be televised live on FOX beginning at 7:30 PM (EDT). The Motor Racing Network (MRN) will carry the live radio broadcast.

To learn more about the GEICO Racing program, please visit: [www.geicogarage.com](http://www.geicogarage.com)

You can also follow GEICO Racing on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/geicoracing](http://www.twitter.com/geicoracing)

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