

Determination Drives Max Papis and GEICO Team to 13th-Place Finish at Dover

DOVER, Del. (May 13, 2011) – Known as the “Monster Mile,” Dover International Speedway has the reputation of a fierce animal that can grab a hold of a driver in a matter of seconds and leave teams with nothing but pieces of carnage. Max Papis and the No. 9 GEICO Racing team entered the sixth race of the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series looking to survive the 200-lap event and bring home a solid effort.

Under sunny skies in Delaware, Papis took to the concrete mile for practice with a trial setup to experiment and see if the team could gain ground on their competitors. Papis communicated to his GEICO crew that his Toyota Tundra didn't like the particular setup, making the decision to switch to one closer to his Germain Racing teammates. Hitting the track early Friday morning for qualifying, Papis held the truck wide open around the high-banked corners to roll off from the 23rd position in the 12th Annual Lucas Oil 200.

Once the green flag waved, Papis looked to attack and move towards the front of the field. Unfortunately, a loose handling condition quickly plagued the driver and relegated the GEICO Toyota to the 26th position as the first caution slowed the pace on lap eight for a single-truck accident on the backstretch. Papis remained on the racetrack and restarted on lap 13 from 24th-place.

As the air pressure rose in his four tires, Papis radioed to Crew Chief Randy Goss that he began to feel a tight handling condition that was hindering him from turning in the corners. As leader and eventual race winner Kyle Busch was setting a blistering pace, the No. 9 GEICO Toyota fell one lap down to the leaders on lap 30. Seventeen laps later, the second caution flew on lap 47 for a spin in turn two. Papis brought his Tundra to pit road for four tires, fuel, and adjustments to help the handling. The Como, Italy native restarted on lap 51 from the 27th position.

Over the next 25 laps, Papis kept working his way past competitors as he looked to place himself in the Lucky Dog position. Another caution came on lap 74 for a hard-hit by Ricky Carmichael but Papis fell a couple spots short of receiving the free pass. The GEICO Toyota returned to the attention of his pit crew for four tires, fuel, and additional adjustments.

Restarting on lap 81, Papis took off from 24th-place, after a solid pit stop by the GEICO crew. A long, uncharacteristic green-flag run ensued for the next 75 laps, forcing all teams to pit while the racing on the track continued. On lap 125, the leaders began hitting pit road and a handful of circuits later, Goss called Papis to pit road for four tires, fuel, and adjustments to continue working on fine-tuning the No. 9 Tundra.

The fifth caution for debris came on lap 156 after all teams had cycled through their respective green-flag pit stops. Papis had broken into the top-20 but was still looking to regain his position on the lead lap. The GEICO Tundra returned to pit road for four tires, fuel, and adjustments before returning to action on lap 161.

As the action picked up on the racetrack over the final 20 laps, four cautions slowed the pace of the race. On lap 186, Papis finally received the break he had been looking for all race long and was the recipient of the Lucky Dog Award, returning the Gecko to the lead lap. The field returned to green with nine laps remaining, with Papis scored in 18th-place. 'Mad Max' worked hard to pass numerous competitors to cross the finish line in the 13th position as the checkered flag flew.

With the determination of the GEICO team, Papis gained two positions to seventh-place in the NCWTS driver championship point standings, sitting 30 points behind sixth-place Austin Dillon. The NASCAR Camping World Truck Series will return to action this Friday night, May 20th at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway.

-PMI-

Contact: Samantha Jones, Player Management International

Email: sjones@pmifirm.com