

MAX PAPIS GALLOPS TO AN 11TH-PLACE FINISH AT KENTUCKY

SPARTA, Ky. (July 7, 2011) – Kentucky is known for the biggest horse race of the year. But when the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series comes to town, a different set of horses take the stage – horsepower under the hood that is. With the inaugural Sprint Cup Series event taking place on Saturday night, the Truck Series roared to life on Thursday for hard racing action under the lights. Max Papis was prepared to make his first career start at the 1.5-mile oval in the Bluegrass State.

On Thursday afternoon, Papis completed his qualifying effort, clocking a time of 32.015 seconds (168.671 mph). This lap placed the Como, Italy native in the 22nd position as the green flag flew shortly after 8 p.m. ET. As the 150-lap race began, Papis quickly radioed to his GEICO Racing crew that his No. 9 Toyota was tight on entry and lacked grip on the outside. The first caution of the night slowed the pace on lap seven for a multi-track accident in turn two. Papis restarted from 20th-place on lap 13.

Papis continued to exuberate patience as the second caution came on lap 19 for oil on the track. Crew chief Randy Goss called his driver to the attention of the GEICO pit crew for fuel and a shock adjustment to help the tight handling condition. With the shock adjustment taking an extended amount of time on pit road, Papis restarted from the 24th position on lap 22.

The GEICO Toyota Tundra did not react the intended way, as Papis radioed that the shock adjustment made the truck loose on entrance and tight in the middle, as well as hitting the splitter on the racetrack. Goss encouraged his driver to keep pushing the Gecko as hard as he could and reassured him that changes would be made on the next stop. The third caution came on lap 59 and gave Papis the opportunity to return to pit road for changes. The GEICO pit crew changed four tires, fuel, reversed the previous shock adjustment and made an air pressure change. As the race returned to green flag conditions on lap 64, Papis held the 21st position.

A short nine laps later, the fourth caution was brought out for an accident in turn four. Papis received the Lucky Dog Award, placing the GEICO Toyota back on the lead lap. Having to start at the tail end of the longest line as a result of the award, Papis came in for fuel and a rubber adjustment to help the handling. On lap 76, Papis was scored in 19th-place.

As the race went into a routine, green flag pit stops became necessary for all the leaders. Around lap 120, fellow competitors began to hit pit road for fuel and adjustments. Papis moved into sixth position before coming to the attention of his GEICO pit crew once again on lap 131 for fuel and a track bar adjustment. The sixth caution came on lap 143 after the field had cycled through with Papis holding 15th-place on the restart.

One lap later, a multi-truck accident occurred in turn four setting the stage for a green-white-checkered finish. Papis once again received the Lucky Dog Award and came to pit road for four fresh tires and fuel. Taking the first attempt at a two-lap finish, Papis took off from the 11th position, which is where the GEICO Toyota Tundra crossed the finish line as the checkered flag flew.

“This race showed the character of my guys on this GEICO team,” said Papis after the race. “We didn’t have a very good Toyota but we never gave up. We kept digging as hard as we could and to come home with an 11th-place finish is good. This team will head back to the shop and figure out why we didn’t run as well as we would have liked and be ready to go next week at Iowa. Overall it was a great night for Germain Racing to have two trucks in the top-five and the GEICO Toyota close behind.”

Papis dropped one position to 12th-place in the NCWTS driver championship point standings. The Italian is only one point behind teammate Todd Bodine who holds the 11th position. Next Saturday, July 16, Papis and the GEICO Racing team head to Iowa Speedway for the 11th race of the 2011 season. Live television coverage can be seen on SPEED beginning at 7:30 p.m. ET with the Set-Up Show. In addition, the radio broadcast can be heard on MRN Radio and Sirius XM NASCAR Radio.

To learn more about the GEICO Racing program, visit: www.geicogarage.com
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