MEARS AND THE GECKO TURN HEADS IN EXCITING INDY WEEKEND

Speedway, IN (July 31, 2011) – Indianapolis Motor Speedway is known as the most sacred place in motorsports. It is a facility that has both made careers and broken them; made poor people rich, and vice versa. Few people know better than Casey Mears how revered Indianapolis is among the racing community.

In a sense, Indianapolis is a family affair for the Bakersfield, CA, native, as his Uncle, Rick Mears, has recorded four Indianapolis 500 wins at the Brickyard.

While Mears and his #13 GEICO Camry got off to a slow start in practice on Friday, landing 38th on the speed chart, they would quickly turn the corner and wow the fans as the day wore on. During the second practice session, Mears hung out in the 20's on the charts, but after a brief meeting with crew chief Bootie Barker and engineer Scott Whitehead during a trip to the garage, Mears re-entered the GEICO Camry for a final run.

With just seven minutes remaining in practice, Mears took to the famed speedway and drew a roar from the crowd when he instantly shot to 2nd on the speed chart. He would ultimately end up 4th when the session ended.

Final practice saw more of the same from Mears and the GEICO Racing team, as they sat 18th at its conclusion.

Having set the IMS track qualifying record in 2004, Mears appeared confident as he calmly climbed into the #13 GEICO Camry and directed his car onto the racetrack for two laps of qualifying. Mears' success was audible, as the crowd cheered loudly when he wheeled around the historic 2.5-mile speedway in just 49.444 seconds, at a rate of speed of 182.024 miles per hour, landing him on the provisional pole. Mears resided on the pole for 17 cars until his close friend Jimmie Johnson bumped him down to 2nd.

When qualifying ended, Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry found themselves in the 11th position, their best qualifying effort of the 2011 season.

When raceday arrived, it was met with bright sunshine and blazing heat, which would take its toll on the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series field, as well as the fans in attendance. Mears' brought a taste of home with him, as his father, Roger, a four-time off-road racing champion, would be his spotter on the frontstretch for the afternoon, while Jason Jarrett would cover the backstretch duties.

Starting 11th, Mears radioed in on lap three: "On the run down the straightaways I'm getting killed." He would free-fall through the field and eventually land in 28th, but he rebounded quickly and by lap 27 he found himself in the 12th position.

Unfortunately, as cars got three wide on Lap 40, grass would fly up from the apron and attach itself to the grill of the #13 GEICO Camry, forcing Mears down pit road for an unscheduled green flag pit stop on Lap 41. As temperatures rose, it became necessary to clean the grass from the grill, causing Mears to fall back to 34th position.

Lap 49 saw David Reutimann take a hard hit into the wall, causing the caution flag to be displayed. Mears was in the 30th position and took advantage of the opportunity to visit pit road for four tires, fuel and adjustments. On lap 62, Mears radioed to Barker: “I’m still getting beat on the straights, but the car feels much better.”

He cracked the Top 30 on lap 72 and entered the Top 25 on lap 78 when he moved into the 24th position.

A lap 94 caution once again allowed the Germain Racing pit crew the opportunity to continue working on the handling of the #13 GEICO Camry. After entering pit road in 30th, the GEICO crew turned Mears around quickly and returned him to the racing surface in the 25th position, netting five spots during his visit.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry climbed back into the Top 15 by lap 122, but as the race began to wind down Barker notified his driver that he would be five laps short on fuel, a dilemma facing much of the field. With just 27 laps remaining in the advertised distance, Mears brought his #13 GEICO Camry down pit road amid green flag conditions to take on the necessary fuel to ensure his completion of the race.

When the checkered flag was displayed late Sunday afternoon, Mears and the GEICO team recorded a 29th place finish in the Brickyard 400. Mears’ effort helped to widen the gap in the owner standings and Germain Racing now sits 43 points inside the coveted Top 35.

“This GEICO team has been working so hard and they gave me a good car today, but we struggled down the straightaways, which hurt us,” a sweaty Mears said after climbing from the #13 GEICO Camry. “What a great weekend though. We come out in practice and sit fourth and then we qualify 11th, so we’re obviously moving in the right direction.

We’ve had a pretty good month when you think about how well we ran at Daytona and then we had a decent night at Kentucky.

Our hard work is really paying off and I’m excited about moving forward.”

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

You can also follow GEICO Racing on Twitter: www.twitter.com/geicoracing

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