

MEARS AND THE GECKO LOOK THE GLEN IN THE EYE AND NET TOP 20

Watkins Glen, NY (August 15, 2011) – Casey Mears and the GEICO racing team arrived in Watkins Glen looking to further solidify their position in the Top 35. In the end, they would accomplish much more. ○

One of the most beautiful racetracks in the world, Watkins Glen International is nestled comfortably in the hills of upstate New York, just a couple of miles from Seneca Lake.

While the backdrop was majestic, the start of Mears' weekend was not. The opening NASCAR Sprint Cup Series practice session saw Mears exit early when engine issues forced him to the garage. The GEICO team worked feverishly to install another motor in time for final practice, hoping to gain track time prior to qualifying.

Fortunately, their hard work paid off, as well as the horsepower of the new motor, and the #13 GEICO Toyota Camry was seen pacing the famed road course during the final practice session.

Mears appeared to be unfazed by the series of events, and promptly shot straight to the top of the speed charts.

At the close of the session, Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry rested solidly in the 10th position on the board.

Although Mears' engine change would relegate him to the rear of the field for Sunday's race, he would still need to turn qualifying laps. Despite knowing that he would start in the rear, Mears

confidently wheeled the #13 GEICO Camry around the 11 turns of the 2.45-mile road course in just 71.443-seconds, out-hustling both Kurt Busch and Greg Biffle for the 26th starting position.

When the sun came up on Sunday morning over the hills of Watkins Glen, it provided hope that the rain would hold off and allow the start of the scheduled 90-lap Sprint Cup Series race. As the day wore on, Mother Nature would dash those hopes.

When the teams took to pit road for the National Anthem, so did the raindrops.

Soon after, NASCAR officials announced that the race would be moved to 10 AM (ET) on Monday.

With a solid crowd still intact, NASCAR promptly displayed the green flag at 10 AM (ET) on Monday, with fog and gray skies looming. Starting 43rd, a determined Mears wasted little time in moving forward. In the opening lap, the #13 GEICO Camry picked up six positions before NASCAR dealt the California native a tough blow.

NASCAR informed Mears that he changed lanes before crossing the start/finish line and taking the green flag.

Consequently, Mears would be forced to bring his #13 GEICO Camry down pit road for a pass-thru penalty, once again sending him to the rear of the field.

Undaunted, Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry returned to the race and picked up where they left off, gaining positions one by one. Having lost a lap due to the penalty, Mears anxiously worked his way around The Glen looking to return the #13 GEICO Camry to the lead lap.

Lap 28 provided the opportunity that Mears was awaiting, as the event's first caution flag of the day was displayed for Greg Biffle, who had depleted his fuel supply.

A competent Mears was able to conserve enough fuel to allow him to remain on the racetrack and take the wave around and return to the lead lap, as instructed by crew chief Bootie Barker.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry restarted 31st on Lap 32 and his assault on the field got underway. Mears was unusually quiet on the radio, rather focusing his energy on piloting his GEICO Camry to the front of the field.

As the race wore on, the fog began to worsen. Mears' spotters both informed him that as the fog got heavier, it prohibited them from seeing certain parts of the racetrack.

Mears response came in the form of him picking up five positions and moving into 26th on Lap 52.

Apparently the fog was of little effect to the #13 GEICO Camry.

Just eight laps later, Mears had moved into 8th before surrendering the position to visit pit road for a scheduled green flag pit stop, where the Germain Racing pit crew promptly provided him with four fresh tires and a full tank of fuel.

By Lap 69, Mears had worked his way back up to the 18th position and had secured a seat for what would be one of the wildest endings of the 2011 season. Lap 86 rolled around and with it came the fourth caution flag of the day, setting up a green-white-checker finish.

As the cars paced the track under caution, Mears and other drivers began to report sprinkles of

rain falling on their windshields.

When the race went back under green for the final three laps, no one could have predicted the chaos that would ensue. After the field took the white flag, a vicious multi-car crash involving David Ragan and David Reutimann erupted on the final lap, stopping the hearts of everyone who was watching the race. Fortunately, Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry escaped the melee unscathed, but Reutimann and Ragan were both seen gingerly exiting their racecars.

When the checkered flag waved in the Finger Lakes region of New York, Casey Mears recorded a 20th place finish after beginning the event at the back of the field. Netting 23 positions, Mears and the GEICO team took a weekend filled with challenges and converted it into one of their most solid performances of the 2011 season.

“We had a great weekend if you think about it because we were forced to deal with several challenges, but we overcame them all, which makes me so proud of this GEICO team,” Mears said after exiting his #13 GEICO Camry. “Many teams presented with the same adversity would have collapsed under the pressure. We didn’t.

We embraced it.

We knew what we had to do and we stayed focused on making something good happen and, in the end, we did.”

After recovering from an engine issue in the opening practice, starting from the rear of the field, and a lane violation at the beginning of the race, Mears and the GEICO team had proven they could not be deterred. Their effort not only netted a Top 20, but also bounced them up a position in the Owner Point standings to 33rd.

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

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