

## CASEY MEARS RECORDS 17TH IN RICHMOND; 9/11 HEAVY ON HIS HEART

Richmond, VA (September 10, 2011) – After a tough weekend in Atlanta, Casey Mears and the GEICO team had visions of rebounding in Richmond. But, before taking their turn at redemption, Mears traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with GEICO executives.

After spending two hours talking about the past, present and future, Mears made his way to Richmond where he anxiously awaited Friday's practice sessions.

Mears quickly settled in at Richmond and paced the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile facility in just 21.44 seconds at a rate of speed of 125.927 miles per hour. His sporty effort would place the #13 GEICO Camry third on the speed chart in the opening practice session.

Unfortunately, qualifying saw Mears battle a tight condition that even caused television broadcasters to take notice, prohibiting him to turn the car in the corners.

Saturday night would see Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry rolling off of the starting grid in the 30th position, just behind Martin Truex, Jr, and Denny Hamlin.

While Saturday night would present 400 laps of racing in front of a packed house, it also served as the heaviest of eves. Race fans and drivers alike felt the gravity of the 10-year anniversary of the Attack on America, which would fall just one day later on September 11th.

American flags filled the grandstands, accompanied by an unwavering sense of patriotism, during an emotionally moving pre-race ceremony.

When Mears and the GEICO team took to the starting grid, they were accompanied by Marine Sergeant Courtney Rauch, who lost his left leg while serving in Afghanistan. Prior to the race, Mears and his wife, Trisha, presented him with a token of the team's appreciation.

Rauch is in the process of training for a marathon, which served as great motivation for the GEICO team.

Starting 30th, Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry moved up to 29th by the close of the opening lap. Unfortunately, the event's first caution flag of the evening flew on Lap 3, halting Mears' progress.

It was the next caution that would serve as a thorn in Mears' side.

After Mears restarted 29th on Lap 7, cars began to bunch up a lap later causing a 13-car crash

that collected the GEICO machine. Upon inspection of the #13 GEICO Camry as it made its way slowly from the crash site, crew chief Bootie Barker indicated to Mears: "It's not bad at all."

Mears visited pit road three times to repair damage and thanks to the expedient work of the Germain Racing pit crew, remained on the lead lap.

Mears ultimately restarted 28th when the field went back to green on Lap 20 and would survive the fury of caution flags, fifteen in total, that would wave on Saturday night. Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry spent their time diligently trying to make up ground until they finally cracked the Top 25 on Lap 65.

From there, Mears seemed undeterred and would ultimately work his way into the Top 20 on Lap 183 and settle in for the balance of the evening.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Camry ran comfortably in the 17th position for a large portion of the evening, but a spin by Menard on the frontstretch with just 16 laps remaining threatened the GEICO Camry's Top 20 status. The resulting caution flag would cause an always scary restart with the race in its final laps. Mears took the opportunity to visit pit road and take on four tires and a single can of fuel.

The green flag turned the field loose with just 12 laps left on the board. While things would get dicey, Mears wheeled the final laps with a veteran's calm and recorded a 17th place finish under a full moon in Richmond.

After exiting his GEICO Camry following the race, Mears was slow to talk about racing, but quick to honor our country and those affected by 9/11.

“I’m not sure racing is what we need to be talking about right now, as we sit a day away from the 10th anniversary of the Attack on America,” Mears said. “It was so humbling to be on pit road before the race with Courtney (Rauch, Marine) and to also see the patriotism of all of our great NASCAR fans. It really gave me motivation in the racecar tonight and I’m proud of this GEICO team because we didn’t quit after that early crash and they worked really hard to repair the car.”

What we did tonight typifies the American spirit: we encountered adversity, we worked hard and we overcame.”

He continued, “Tonight and this weekend is about giving people hope.

It is about thinking of and praying for those affected by 9/11 and also our troops who protect our freedom and allow us to come out here and race every weekend.”

Mears and the GEICO team will enjoy a special weekend when they travel to Chicago for the next event. The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race, dubbed the GEICO 400, will offer Mears and the Germain Racing team a chance to be surrounded by a great number of GEICO associates and guests from the corporate office.

Aside from his normal weekend duties, Mears will be doing a series of autograph signings and media appearances throughout the week in Chicago. Thursday night, Mears and GEICO NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series driver, Max Papis, will be making an appearance at the Fan Rally in Joliet from 7:00 PM (CT) to 8:00 PM (CT).

Friday morning will find Mears meeting fans from 8:00 AM (CT) to 9:00 AM (CT) in the GEICO campground just inside the tunnel, while 10:30 AM (CT) will see the GEICO driver signing for an hour in the Champions Park area.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Toyota Camry will hit the 1.5-mile D-shaped oval of Chicagoland Speedway for the opening practice session at 2:00 PM (ET) on Friday, September 16th. Qualifying will follow on Saturday, September 17th, at 1:40 PM (ET).

The GEICO 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, September 18, 2011, and it will be televised live on ESPN beginning at 2:00 PM (ET). 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)

Please visit the Casey Mears Facebook fan page: [www.facebook.com/casemearsracing](http://www.facebook.com/casemearsracing)

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