

LOOSE HANDLING CONDITION PLAGUES MAX PAPIS IN CHICAGOLAND

JOLIET, Ill. (September 16, 2011) – With only eight NASCAR Camping World Truck Series races left on the 2011 schedule, Max Papis and his GEICO Racing team were looking for a strong run at Chicagoland Speedway on Friday night. During the 150-lap race, Papis and the No. 9 Toyota Tundra battled a loose handling condition. Despite only three cautions leaving the team with a small realm of opportunity to make adjustments, Papis captured an 18th-place finish under the lights. This was Papis' 13th top-20 finish this season.

“We fought hard all night long,” said Papis, after the race. “The GEICO team continues to keep pushing and never give up no matter what we are facing. The truck was just really loose all night and we got it better towards the end of the race but we ran out of time. We will head back to the shop and keep working. I think we will be good in New Hampshire.”

After two practice sessions, Papis took to the 1.5-mile D-shaped oval for qualifying. The Como, Italy native clocked a lap of 31.334 seconds (172.337 mph) to secure the 19th starting position. Shortly after 8 p.m. ET, Papis and the rest of the field started the Fast Five 225. The first caution came quickly on lap 11 for debris in turn 2. The GEICO Toyota Tundra was loose right from the start, prompting crew chief Randy Goss to bring Papis to pit road for fuel and wedge adjustment. Papis took off from 20th-place on the lap 14 restart.

The Germain Racing Toyota continued to be hindered by the loose condition as Papis entered and exited the corners. The leaders who did not pit under the first caution were forced to make green flag pit stops around lap 35. Because Papis topped off with fuel during his earlier stop, the GEICO machine was able to continue longer than his competitors. The No. 9 red and blue Tundra moved as high as fifth before pitting under green on lap 56 for four tires, fuel, and adjustments.

A short three circuits later, the second caution slowed the pace on lap 59 for fluid on the track. Since the team just visited pit road, Papis took the wave around to receive one lap back and be in contention for the Lucky Dog Award. On lap 66, the field returned to green flag conditions with Papis scored in the 22nd position.

Within 10 laps, Papis returned to the top-20 in 18th-place as the racer continued to drive through the loose handling condition. The fast pace persisted as only the third caution was displayed on lap 83 for debris. Papis reported that the GEICO Tundra was "loose center off" before returning to pit road for four tires, fuel, and an air pressure adjustment.

Papis was scored in the 20th position on the lap 88 restart. By lap 100, the Gecko was back up to 18th-place. The final 50 laps remained caution-free, forcing teams to return to pit road for fuel under green conditions. The loose handling condition got better as the run went on, so on lap 131 Papis brought his GEICO Toyota to the attention of his crew one last time for four tires, fuel, and minor adjustments. Over the final 10 laps, Papis was able to hold his spot on the track and cross the finish line in the 18th position.

With his solid finish, Papis currently sits in 16th-place in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series driver championship point standings. 'Mad Max' is only two points behind Justin Lofton who holds the 15th position. The Truck Series returns to action this Saturday, September 24th for the running of the F.W. Webb 175 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. Watch the action live on SPEED Channel at 3 p.m. ET.

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