

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MEARS CONQUERS IRISH HILLS AND BRINGS HOME TOP 20

Brooklyn, MI (June 17, 2012) – Casey Mears and his Germain Racing team came storming into Michigan still glowing from a positive weekend in the Pocono Mountains that saw them make significant progress with their racecars. This weekend also welcomed Valvoline™ NextGen™ as a primary sponsor of the #13 Germain Racing NASCAR Sprint Cup Series entry.

Valvoline(TM)

NextGen will also adorn the car as a primary sponsor for the June 30th race at Kentucky Speedway.

When Mears and his #13 Valvoline NextGen Ford Fusion took to the track for the series' opening practice session, they experienced frustration after landing 35th on the board. The final practice session would revive the hopes of the team as they made necessary adjustments that sent Mears ascending the speed charts and finishing up in the 19th position, 16 spots to the good.

When qualifying got underway on Saturday afternoon, Mears wheeled his #13 Valvoline NextGen Fusion around Michigan International Speedway in just 36.262 seconds, at a rate of speed of 198.555 miles per hour. His effort placed him 24th on the starting grid, just ahead of Brad Keselowski, Jeff Gordon and Kyle Busch.

When Mears and his Germain Racing team arrived at the track on Sunday morning, their battle with the 2-mile repaved tri-oval would be delayed, as rain settled over the Brooklyn, Michigan, area. It wouldn't take long for the weather to clear and for the cars and drivers to take to the starting grid before an enthusiastic crowd of 82,000 fans.

Once the green flag set the field loose amid clearing skies, Mears made quick progress and jumped three positions to 21st before the event's first caution flag of the day waved on lap two for a Kurt Busch spin. Once the race went back to green, Mears and the #13 Valvoline NextGen Fusion dropped a few spots before setting sail for the front of the field.

As the race passed the halfway point, he would even dip into the Top 10 before Lap 126 saw him craftily dodging the crashing cars of Joey Logano and Kasey Kahne.

The balance of Mears' afternoon was spent in the Top 25 before a late-race surge saw him hustle the #13 Valvoline NextGen Fusion to a 20th place finish. The result accounts for the team's second Top 20 of the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season.

"It was great to get out of there with a Top 20 finish and give both Valvoline NextGen and GEICO a good day at the track," Mears said. "We enjoyed having Valvoline NextGen on the car and their sponsorship shows that we're making progress and companies are taking notice of our improvement. We appreciate Valvoline's support and look forward to having them back on the car in Kentucky in a couple of weeks."

Mears continued, "I'm proud of all of our guys.

Our team fights hard and when we're struggling, we don't quit; Bootie (Barker, crew chief) and the guys keep hustling until we find what we need."

The GEICO Gecko will return to the hood of the #13 Ford Fusion this week when the Germain Racing team travels to the Napa Valley for the first road course race of the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season. Mears has two career Top 10's at the northern California racing circuit.

Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion will hit the track in Sonoma, CA, for the opening practice session on Friday, June 22nd, at 3:00 PM (EDT). Qualifying will follow at 6:40 PM (EDT).

The Toyota/Save Mart 350 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, June 24th, and it will be televised live on TNT beginning at 2:00 PM (EDT). The Performance Racing Network (PRN) will carry the live radio broadcast.

Follow Valvoline on Twitter @Valvoline. To learn more about Germain Racing, please visit: [www.GermainRacing.com](http://www.GermainRacing.com) or follow on Twitter @GermainRacing

To learn more about the GEICO racing program, please visit: [www.caseymearsracing.com](http://www.caseymearsracing.com)

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

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