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MEARS ESCAPES DAYTONA WITH 18TH; CLOSELY EYES TOP 25

GEICO driver records fourth consecutive Top 20 finish and sits just 15 points removed from Top 25 in point standings

Daytona Beach, FL (July 7, 2012) – Coming off of three consecutive Top 20 finishes, Casey Mears and the GEICO team arrived in Daytona hoping to seek redemption from a February race that sent them home brokenhearted. Aside from marking the start of the back half of the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season, Daytona also served as an opportunity for the Germain Racing team to help GEICO celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Mears carried a special logo commemorating the milestone on the lower rear quarter panels of

his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion.

Notably, GEICO recently surpassed 11 million policyholders and honored the 11 millionth policyholder at a ceremony in Tucson, AZ.

Daytona is known for its fireworks in both a literal and figurative sense, and Saturday night would not fail to provide the much anticipated on-track excitement. Three wide pack racing and a last lap crash kept fans on their feet and left drivers with a heightened sense of awareness.

The Germain Racing team has experienced significant success on restrictor-plate racetracks, so no one seemed surprised when they shot straight to the top of the speed chart in the opening practice session on Thursday. Mears sat ninth on the board when practice ended and set his sights on qualifying.

When qualifying got underway at the World Center of Racing on Friday, Mears hurriedly made his way around the legendary racetrack at 191.934 miles per hour, navigating the facility in a prompt 46.891-seconds. His effort landed him seventh on the grid and also accounted for the team's best starting position in the three-year history of their NASCAR Sprint Cup Series program.

While the previous two days produced desired results for Mears and his GEICO team, Saturday

night would not yield the same. During the parade laps for the Coke Zero 400, the #13 Fusion fell victim to the same issue that plagued the team late in February's Daytona 500.

As the field made its way around the 2.5-mile high-banked tri-oval, Mears reported a loss of fuel pressure and was forced to visit pit road so the team could replace the fuel module prior to the race going green.

Consequently, the #13 GEICO Fusion was relegated to the back of the pack when the green flag set the field underway for 160 laps of racing.

On the opening lap, Mears jumped eight positions to 35th, but rather than attempt a charge to the front and risk peril, he settled into the rear of the field with other drivers who opted to attempt to miss the 'big one'. While he aimed to play it safe, instinct dictated otherwise and Mears quickly found himself reaching the Top 20 by lap 25. After ascending as high as 12th, he made his first visit to pit road for a scheduled green flag stop on lap 42, where he took on right-side tires, fuel and a trackbar adjustment.

Mears' race went smoothly, as he dipped into the Top 10, and even led a lap, before a Sam Hornish, Jr., caution sent the #13 GEICO Fusion down pit road for service. However, it would be the next yellow flag that would set him on the edge of his seat, as he narrowly avoided spinning racecars during a big crash on lap 124.

Mears kept his GEICO car in the Top 20 for the balance of the evening and would draft to the front of the field at-will before a late race incident thwarted any hopes of visiting Victory Lane at Daytona.

With just eight laps remaining in the advertised distance, the tri-oval became the busiest place at the speedway when a 14-car crash claimed Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion. He was able to drive away from the incident and bring his damaged racecar to the attention of his fast acting GEICO pit crew.

Crew chief Bootie Barker shouted out orders and the Germain team members quickly complied as they provided Mears with repairs over two pit road visits under caution and returned the GEICO Fusion to the racetrack without losing a lap.

While Mears was running in the 20th position at the time of the crash, he would restart the race from the 19th position, a testament to the efficiency of his pit crew.

Just two laps remained when the green flag turned the field loose for the final time on Saturday night at Daytona International Speedway. The only person busier than Mears was his spotter Jason Jarrett, who effortlessly guided Mears and his #13 GEICO Fusion through a last lap crash that collected 15 cars and draped the frontstretch in mangled sheet metal.

Although he fell victim to a faulty fuel module and late-race crash, Mears managed to salvage an 18th place finish when the caution flag ended 400-miles of racing. He wrapped up the evening as the third fastest Ford and also extends Germain Racing's string of Top 20 finishes to four.

"What can I really say? I mean, what a night for this GEICO team," Mears said after sliding from his damaged racecar. "I felt bad for the guys and our team owner Bob Germain because we were fast all weekend and we've worked really hard to be able to qualify seventh, so that fuel module issue was frustrating, especially since it's the exact problem

we experienced here in February.”

He continued, “The late race crash was unfortunate, but the guys on our GEICO crew did a great job of making repairs and keeping me on the lead lap.

It was a tough night, but a lot of good came out of it, too.

We saw how organized we are as a team and how quickly we can overcome adversity and still make something good happen.”

A week ago, Mears left Kentucky Speedway 28th in the driver point standings and 30 points outside the Top 25. Tonight, he departs Daytona one position to the good, in 27th, and with his point deficit cut in half to 15.

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

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