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FLAT TIRE CUTS DAY SHORT FOR MEARS AND GEICO TEAM

Chicago, IL (September 16, 2012) – Casey Mears and his GEICO Racing team blew into the Windy City prepared for a busy weekend filled with exciting opportunities to promote their sponsor. Mears walked off the plane and within an hour found himself signing autographs at a local GEICO office in Chicago where he greeted policyholders on Thursday. The weekend had Mears frequently appearing on GEICO stages and in GEICO campgrounds around Chicagoland Speedway, allowing him the opportunity to interface with his biggest fans.

Friday saw the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series get down to business when they took to the racetrack for the weekend's two practice sessions. The end of the first practice had the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion 31st on the board, but shortly thereafter, Mears hit the track for final practice and made his way quickly around the 1.5-mile facility. He sat 20th on the board when the session closed. Qualifying took place on Saturday afternoon and Mears managed to handle

the slippery racetrack and navigate it in just 29.992 seconds, placing him 27th on Sunday's GEICO 400 starting grid.

Clear skies and sunshine greeted the Gecko when he arrived in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series garage on Sunday to visit the team that features his likeness on their #13 Ford Fusion. After many photos and a pep talk, the Gecko departed as the team headed to the starting grid. Mears rolled off 27th when the green flag set the field underway on Sunday afternoon. He quickly jumped two spots to 25th on the opening lap before cracking the top 20 on lap 42. Mears' lap times were consistent with the leaders and even though he was battling a handling condition, his lap times rarely wavered.

When the caution flag was displayed on lap 65, Mears brought his #13 GEICO Fusion to the attention of his Germain Racing pit crew who quickly outfitted him with fresh tires and fuel. While most cars either took two tires, or took advantage of the wave-around, crew chief Bootie Barker gave Mears four tires to allow him the best opportunity to race his way into the Lucky Dog position. Barker's thought was prophetic because it wasn't long before Mears sat as the first car a lap down, in position to receive the Lucky Dog award.

Mears was approaching the pit window when he brought out the yellow flag on lap 149. His right front tire went down in turn 1, sending the #13 GEICO Fusion hard into the outside wall and bringing an abrupt end to Germain Racing's afternoon. After sitting with a top 15 finish in sight, Mears was instead relegated to a 36th place finish that caused visible frustration on his face when he climbed from his GEICO Fusion.

“Days like this are frustrating because the Germain Racing guys gave me a good racecar and we were definitely going to end up finishing anywhere between 12th and 18th,” Mears said. “GEICO is the best sponsor in racing and we were in position to put on a good show for them today, but there’s not much you can do about a flat tire. I’ll probably be a little sore tomorrow, but we’ll all be at the shop this week preparing for our upcoming races.” He added, “It was a lot of fun to be a part of what GEICO was doing in Chicago this weekend. When they do something, they do it big and it was cool for our whole team to be able to see it. I made appearances at their main display, the campground display and also visited with their guests in the suite. We’re very excited about GEICO’s sponsorship extension of our team through 2014 and since receiving the news last week, we already have productive things happening.”

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

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