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MEARS AND THE GECKO NET 21ST IN TEXAS COMEBACK

Fort Worth, TX (November 4, 2012) – After a few tough weeks at the racetrack, the Germain Racing team and driver Casey Mears rebounded with a solid effort in Martinsville last week. They hoped to continue the momentum when they arrived in the Lone Star State for this week's race, a 500-mile event that would challenge even the best, well-funded NASCAR Sprint Cup Series teams.

When the team unloaded the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion for the weekend's first practice on Friday, the car reacted negatively and sent the engineers scrambling. However, by session's end, crew chief Bootie Barker and his staff made changes that saw Mears head north on the speed chart, where he ended up 19th. Qualifying got underway at Texas Motor Speedway late Friday afternoon and Mears wheeled the #13 GEICO Fusion around the 1.5-mile quad-oval in just 28.672-seconds, landing him 20th on Sunday's starting grid.

With a late start time of 2 PM (CST) on Sunday, each team would be faced with the changing attitude of their racecars, as the sun was sure to set prior to the conclusion of the race. Starting from 20th, Mears lost ground when the green flag waved and fell as low as 26th while being challenged by a tight condition. Although he found the car tough to handle, that didn't deter Mears from driving the #13 GEICO Fusion to the front of the field, where he entered the top ten before being forced down pit road for a scheduled green flag pitstop on lap 46. After being outfitted with four fresh Goodyear Racing tires and a full tank of Sunoco racing fuel, he rejoined the field and continued to battle his racecar until the long green flag run dictated Mears make a second scheduled green flag stop on Lap 91. This stop would prove fruitful, as Mears reported just two laps later that the car was turning better than it did during the previous run.

The on-track action heated up a bit for Mears when he narrowly avoided a spinning AJ Allmendinger on lap 108. The #13 GEICO Fusion sustained grill damage from the incident, but the Germain Racing pit crew quickly got it taped up and repaired while under caution. The race went back under green on lap 118, but not for long. Bobby Labonte lost an engine on the restart and forced a chain reaction crash that saw the #13 GEICO Fusion fall victim to damage to the rear left-side of the racecar. Mears made two visits to pit road under caution for repairs and his crew returned him to the racing surface without losing a lap. Barker assured his driver that the damage was inconsequential and would not affect Mears when the race returned to green.

As the race began to wind down, the Germain Racing team used strategy in an attempt to rejoin the lead lap. With just eight laps to go, Mears and the #13 GEICO Fusion had raced their way into the Lucky Dog position and sat in 25th place. Barker's strategy would pay off a brief three laps later when Mark Martin brought out the event's final caution flag with five laps remaining, returning Mears to the lead lap. While he restarted from the 24th position with two to go, Mears managed to pass three cars on the final lap to record a 21st place, lead lap finish when the checkered flag halted 502-miles of racing. Mears effort accounts for the team's 17th top 25 finish of the 2012 season.

“Not a bad night, especially with the repairs we had to make after that restart incident, but the guys on our GEICO crew did a great job all night and it showed in the end,” Mears said. “These guys never quit and it’s great when you’re in the trenches with people who keep fighting and absolutely refuse to quit. We kept working our strategy and in the end we were on the lead lap and almost got another top 20. Our team is special and the character and heart of everyone shows each week. I’m grateful for the support of everyone at GEICO, Germain Racing and Ford, and I’m glad we could fight back tonight and get another top 25.” He continued, “We’ve had two solid weekends and I’m hoping we can continue the momentum and end the season strong.”

Next weekend, the Germain Racing team will head west for the final time this year to Phoenix, Arizona, for race number 35 of the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion will hit the track at Phoenix International Raceway for the opening practice session on Friday, November 9th, at 2:00 PM (EST). Qualifying will follow at 6:10 PM (EST).

The AdvoCare 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, November 11th, and it will be televised live on ESPN beginning at 2:00 PM (EST). The Motor Racing Network (MRN) will carry the live radio broadcast.

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

You can also follow GEICO Racing on Twitter: www.twitter.com/geicoracing

Please visit the Casey Mears Facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/caseymearsracing

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