

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **PERSEVERANCE PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR MEARS AND GEICO TEAM**

Daytona Beach, FL (February 24, 2013) – After a successful week of practice and qualifying, Casey Mears and his GEICO team were anxious to get underway at Daytona International Speedway on Sunday afternoon. While gray skies hovered and rain threatened the area, clear weather prevailed, allowing a full 500 miles of racing at the World Center of Racing.

The previous weekend saw Mears sit 17th in both practice sessions before qualifying 15th. Mears' #13 GEICO Ford Fusion was strong, as evidenced by his effort during Thursday's Budweiser Duel number one, where he ran in second place for the bulk of the race before finishing eighth.

The Germain Racing team looked to pick up where they left off when the green flag set the 55th Daytona 500 underway on Sunday afternoon. Starting 17th, Mears vacillated back and forth in the draft before the event's first caution flag was displayed on lap 27 for debris on the backstretch. Sitting in the 22nd position, he brought his GEICO Fusion to the attention of the Germain Racing pit crew.

They quickly refreshed him with tires and fuel before returning him to the racing surface two positions to the good, in 20th place.

Unfortunately, lap 33 of 200 changed the trajectory of Mears' day when Kasey Kahne abruptly got sideways in front of the field. While Mears did a masterful job of avoiding the incident, Tony Stewart would later make an unexpected turn into the #13 car, causing heavy damage to the front of Mears' GEICO Fusion. Juan Pablo Montoya, Kevin Harvick and Jamie McMurray were also collected in the crash.

While NASCAR's elite headed for their garage stalls, the crew of Germain Racing went to work on Mears' car on pit road.

Armed with a sawsall and bear bond, the GEICO pit crew quickly made extensive repairs to the front end of his Ford Fusion.

They ultimately returned Mears to the race just ten laps down, while others involved in the crash would take much longer to reappear.

Although Mears sat in the 37th position for much of the race, the Germain crew worked efficiently on pit road each time the GEICO Fusion made a visit, keeping him in optimum position to make up ground. While Mears may have otherwise seemed doomed as he pedaled around the 2.5-mile superspeedway in a damaged racecar, he was instead turning fast, consistent laps that were competitive with the leaders.

When the checkered flag brought the 500-mile event to a close, Mears and his GEICO team managed to overcome a major setback early to pick up eight positions and salvage a 29th place finish.

"We had a good, consistent week leading up to the 500, so it's hard to be too upset because these things happen at Daytona and Talladega," Mears said after the race. "What we focus on is how we respond to the situation and in this case we kept digging and working hard, and because of our effort, we were able to pick up eight spots, which is huge at the beginning of the season. I'm really proud of the guys and their perseverance today."

He added, "It was a great week and I'm appreciative of GEICO and

Bob

Germain's commitment to the team in making sure we run the full season in 2013 and 2014.

It's all positive as we head to

Phoenix

next week."

Mears and his GEICO team pack it up and head west next week where they will spend the next three of four races on the west coast; Phoenix, Las Vegas, Bristol and Fontana compose their month of March.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion will hit the track at Phoenix International Raceway for the opening practice session on Friday, March 1st, at 2:00 PM (EST). Qualifying will follow at 6:10 PM (EST).

The Subway Fresh Fit 500 is on Sunday, March 3rd, and it will be televised live on FOX beginning at 3:00 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](http://www.caseymearsracing.com)

You can also follow GEICO Racing on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/geicoracing](http://www.twitter.com/geicoracing)

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