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MEARS AND GEICO TEAM ALL SMILES AFTER STRONG MARTINSVILLE RUN

Mears picks up 25 spots en route to 16th place finish and jumps four positions to 17th in points

Martinsville, VA (April 7, 2013) – Prior to the first off-week of the 2013 season, Casey Mears and the Germain Racing team turned in three top 15 finishes in four weeks. A well-rested GEICO team arrived at Martinsville Speedway this weekend aiming to continue their string of good runs. While the weekend would end well, it certainly didn't start that way and Mears and his counterparts would first be forced to overcome themselves before setting their sights on the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series field on Sunday.

The opening practice session on Friday saw Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion rest 39th on the board when practice closed, only to be later betrayed by qualifying which relegated the Bakersfield, CA, native to 41st on Sunday's starting grid. Fortunately, Saturday afforded the Germain Racing team two practice sessions to work through the kinks and they did so quickly. Mears' speed picked up considerably, offering hope to the crew who worked feverishly in the garage to make changes to the GEICO Fusion.

A full house stood watch over the beginning of Sunday's STP Gas Booster 500 where bright skies and perfect temperatures set the scene for 500 laps of racing. Starting 41st at a ½-mile

paperclip-shaped racetrack would present Mears with a significant challenge as he worked his way through the field. He picked up six positions on the opening lap and would ultimately crack the top 25 on lap 117, but found himself a lap down to the field on lap 156.

Undaunted, Mears turned consistent lap times and on lap 280 his patience was rewarded. The #56 car of Martin Truex, Jr. found the wall, bringing out the caution flag and allowing Mears and his #13 GEICO Fusion to return to the lead lap after battling to secure the Lucky Dog position.

This would serve as a turning point for Mears, who began to travel almost effortlessly around the ½-mile legendary speedway, ascending to the 13th position before Ryan Newman's flat tire brought out the caution on lap 361.

The GEICO team would experience a small setback when Mears made his visit to pit road under caution.

Mears' tire carrier was struck by Jeff Gordon, forcing a delay in the stop and sending the #13 GEICO Fusion back out onto the racing surface in the 17th position, four spots worse than when it entered.

Mears also fell victim to two speeding penalties during the race, which twice sent him to the rear of the field, forcing him to work his way through lap traffic and risk peril during his journey back to the front.

Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion only got better as the event wore on and his lap time on the final lap of the race saw him 5th fastest of the top 15 cars.

Despite multiple challenges, Mears and his GEICO team finished a stunning 25 positions better than where they started and crossed the line 16th when the checkered flag halted 500 laps of hard racing.

"This was a great day for the GEICO team and we proved once again that we can figure this car out, work hard and get to the front regardless of the challenges facing us," Mears said after the race. "I'm so proud of the guys on this Germain Racing team because we had a tough first day here, but they kept digging and were able to make some changes that quickly turned this GEICO Ford Fusion around and made it fast. This place can be tough on you, but we did a good job of fighting it and came out of here with another good finish."

I'm happy for GEICO and also our team owner
Bob
Germain because they've put so much faith in us and it's paying off.

We're looking forward to Texas next week."

More exciting news was abound when the point standings were released after the race. Mears makes a colossal jump in the Driver Point standings to the 17th position from 21st, while team owner

Bob

Germain makes a leap of his own and moves to 20th from the 23rd position in Owner Points.

Mears sits just 18 points behind Jeff Gordon, who occupies the 12th position.

Next week will find the Germain Racing team heading to the Lone Star State for a little 'Saturday night under the lights' racing.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion will hit the track at Texas Motor Speedway for the opening practice session on Friday, April 12th, at 12:30 PM (EDT). Qualifying will follow at 6:40 PM (EDT).

The NRA 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Saturday, April 13th, and it will be televised live on FOX beginning at 7:30 PM (EDT). The Performance Racing Network (PRN) 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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