

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEARS AND GEICO TEAM REBOUND WITH STRONG FINISH AT ATLANTA

HAMPTON, Ga. (September 1, 2013) - Over the course of a 36-race NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season, certain tracks are bound to cause teams and drivers many headaches and sleepless nights. Atlanta Motor Speedway happened to be that track for Casey Mears and the GEICO Racing team over the Labor Day weekend. While the team got off to a slow start when the green flag got the race underway on Sunday evening, the Germain Racing team remained intent on recording a strong finish. After 325-laps of hard racing, Mears and his No. 13 GEICO Ford Fusion did just that when they crossed the finish line in the 22nd position, marking their 16th top-25 finish of the 2013 season.

After struggling to find speed during the opening practice session on Friday afternoon, Mears laid down a solid lap in qualifying to claim the 19th starting position for Sunday's Advocare 500. A brief rain shower passed through the Hampton, Georgia, area prior to driver introductions, but the southern humidity quickly soaked up any precipitation and the green flag waved on time under clear skies. By lap five, Mears radioed the GEICO Ford Fusion was loose on entry and plowed through the corner. The competition caution on lap 26 could not have come any sooner as the California native was pushed back to the 40th position in the opening segment. Crew chief Bootie Barker brought his driver to pit road for four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, and left front damage repair sustained from brief contact with a fellow competitor on the opening lap.

Within 10 laps, Mears broke into the top-30 as the adjustments "definitely helped" but the GEICO Ford still needed additional rear grip. Over the next 100 laps, Barker and the Germain Racing team took every opportunity to work on the handling as numerous cautions were displayed. Despite the valiant effort, the handling still escaped Mears and as a long caution-free run continued, teams were forced to make green flag pit stops. On lap 168, Barker called Mears to pit road for fresh rubber, fuel, and an air pressure adjustment. However, Mears was unable to slow down the GEICO Ford fast enough prior to entering pit road, resulting in a pass-thru penalty for speeding.

The yellow flag was displayed on lap 193 and Barker instructed Mears to stay out and take the wave around, regaining one lap to the leaders. With the restart on lap 199, the veteran driver took off from the 31st position. A quick caution was displayed seven laps later, allowing Mears to come to pit road for four tires, fuel, air pressure and track bar adjustments to help the loose handling condition. While in 29th-place on the restart, the No. 13 GEICO Ford rapidly moved up three positions to 26th, the highest of all cars on his lap. Mears successfully ran in this spot through another cycle of green flag pit stops and when a caution was displayed on lap 288, the team decided to take the wave around once again.

On the lap 294 restart, Mears moved into the 24th position and never looked back. Over the final 30 laps, the GEICO Ford passed two additional cars, allowing Mears to cross the finish line in 22nd-place.

"Man, I'm not sure what we need to do with this place," said Mears, after the 500-mile event. "We kept working on the GEICO Ford throughout the entire race, but we could never find the handling we needed. The car was the best at the end right there but we still have some work to do before we come back next year. The guys never gave up and kept making adjustments to try and make it better. It's on to the next one though. I'm looking forward to Richmond next week and seeing a lot of GEICO people. It should be a good weekend."

The next event on the Sprint Cup Series schedule is the Federated Auto Parts 400 on Saturday, September 7th at Richmond International Raceway. The race starts at 7 PM ET, with live coverage provided by ABC beginning with its pre-race show at 6:30PM ET. Motor Racing Network (MRN) will also have 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

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