

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FLAT TIRE DERAILS MEARS' STRONG RUN IN THE LONE STAR STATE**

Fort Worth, TX (November 3, 2013) – Casey Mears and the Germain Racing team have been closing out the season on a strong note, scoring four top-25 finishes in their last six starts. Texas offered the GEICO team another opportunity to continue their run as the end of the season sits just around the bend. Historically, the team has struggled in the Lone Star State, but that served as little deterrence when practice got underway at the 1.5-mile speedway.

Mears was 27th in the opening practice session on Friday before later matching his effort in qualifying, where he would land 27th on Sunday's starting grid, just behind Clint Bowyer and Elliott Sadler. The picture of consistency, the first practice on Saturday also saw Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion 27th on the speed charts. The Germain team hustled, made changes and crunched numbers before sending Mears out for the final practice where he ultimately rested in the 17th position when the session closed. Ten spots to the good, the GEICO team was hopeful when raceday arrived.

Bright sunshine and reasonable temperatures kicked off Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway, where Mears and his #13 GEICO Ford Fusion rolled off the starting grid from the 27th position.

501-miles of racing awaited the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series field. Mears had no sooner approached the top 25 on lap 15 before the event's first caution flag was displayed for debris. It was a welcomed break, given that he had been in debate with the handling of the car since the waving of the green flag. Mears said to crew chief Bootie Barker: "It's a handful. As soon as I try to touch the gas, I'm sideways." Mears delivered his #13 GEICO Fusion to the attention of his pit crew who provided him with four fresh tires, a tank of fuel and much needed adjustments. He restarted 30th when the race went back to green on lap 18, but quickly jumped to 26th while making continued progress on the field.

Things appeared to go smoothly until lap 53 when Mears reported that his GEICO Ford had a bad vibration. Barker quickly ordered his driver to pit road under green to rectify the issue. Mears departed the pit stall with four new tires and fuel and left behind the nagging vibration, but was now one lap down to the field. Upon his return to the racing surface, Mears said, "The vibration is gone, but I don't think it was a tire issue; it felt more like a loose wheel." Mears would soon suffer an additional setback when the caution flag waved just one lap after he visited pit road, now sending him two laps down. Rather than pitting, Barker instructed Mears to stay out and take the wavearound, which would return him to being just one lap down. He restarted the race in 40th place on lap 64, but promptly found himself in the Lucky Dog position by lap 79.

While Mears continued to make his way through the field, lap 85 saw the skies suddenly darken while winds picked up and temperatures sharply declined.

Mears was on-track to record another solid finish before lap 175 heard him anxiously report to Barker, "The car feels sloppy and it won't turn in. It feels like the tires are flat." A lap later he communicated that the right rear tire was indeed flat and he expeditiously made his way to pit road before chancing a crash or damage to the racecar from an upset tire carcass. The GEICO crew replaced all four tires and sent him back out to do battle with a field that was now three

laps ahead of him. Although his hopes for a strong finish were dashed, Mears and his crew went about their work in the same competitive fashion, allowing the GEICO driver to dash from 40th to 33rd by the time the checkered flag waved under the lights in Fort Worth, Texas. Their persistence and effort allowed the team to salvage an otherwise challenging day.

“Today was tough because we really wanted to get a good finish here in Texas; this place has always presented us with a challenge,” Mears said. “We made good progress in final practice and thought we would be okay in the race, but that flat tire really set us back and we were never able to recover. I’m really proud of the guys on this GEICO team because we all kept working hard and we were able to make up some positions before the race was over. We’re looking forward to getting to Phoenix because we were strong there in March and we feel like we’ll have a good shot there again next week.”

The Germain Racing team will now journey west to Phoenix for the second to last race of the 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series season. In March, Mears and his GEICO team taught the Arizona track a lesson when they started 42nd and passed 28 cars en route to a 14th place finish.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Ford Fusion will hit the track at Phoenix International Raceway for the opening practice session on Friday, November 8th, at 1:35 PM (EST). Qualifying will follow at 5:40 PM (EST).

The Advocare 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, November 10th, and it will be televised live on ESPN 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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