

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEARS RUNS IN TOP 10 IN PHOENIX; BETRAYED BY LATE-RACE GAMBLE

Final Pit Stop Sequence Saw Team Finish 27th

Avondale, AZ (11-10-2013) – Phoenix International Raceway was the site of a huge display of muscle by the Germain Racing crew and GEICO driver Casey Mears in the Spring race earlier this season. At that point, the team was looking for vindication from rough luck at Daytona. This weekend, the team could have used a reprieve following the deflating flat tire experience of last week's race at Texas. Just as earlier in the year, any beacon of light at Phoenix would be one hard-earned, not handed out.

The GEICO Ford Fusion ranked 33rd in first practice and landed 30th in the starting lineup for Sunday's 312-lap race. In the final practice sessions, Mears was again 30th and 32nd. The lap times throughout the sessions were within a half-second. From his qualifying position of 30th, Mears moved up to 26th in the opening laps of the race and settled into 27th by lap 15.

"I can't really put the power down coming off the corners," said Mears as he fought to find a line that might work better for the GEICO Ford, 15 laps into what would be a long race, slowed by several long caution periods.

"Good job, you are pulling away now," called crew chief Bootie Barker from the pits at lap 18, while he made plans for adjustments to the GEICO Ford.

The chance to work on the No. 13 car finally came following the lap 49 caution brought out by Denny Hamlin's spin. The GEICO Racing crew went to work on lap 50 on the 26th place GEICO Ford, installing four tires, fuel and making a couple of adjustments to help Mears fight the loose handling condition of the car. Thanks to the quick work of the Germain Racing pit crew, Mears restarted the race one spot to the good in the 25th position at lap 56.

Loose was the term that echoed up and down pit road on Sunday. Many drivers complained of their cars not having enough grip off the corners. Barker and the crew managed to make some headway fighting this condition for Mears, but, according to Mears, the adjustments might have hurt the handling through the center of the turns. He shared this information with Barker while racing in 22nd position at lap 75.

Over the remaining laps, the crew made changes to the car and fought their way into the top ten during the race's long, 82-lap green flag run. As the final green flag pit stops were completed, Mears was shown in 24th position, one lap down, on lap 273. He pulled to 22nd before the final caution flag of the race flew at lap 283, and restarted in this position, in line to be the Lucky Dog if another quick caution flew. For this reason, the team stayed out, and didn't take fresh tires, hoping for another quick caution to allow them to get fresh tires while back on the lead lap. The yellow didn't wave again and the cars that pitted under the final caution, showed fresh rubber was much faster at Phoenix

The GEICO Ford was credited with a 27th place finish after a day of consistent lap times, strong pit work from the Germain Racing pit crew and a worthwhile gamble. Next up for Mears and the GEICO team is the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway!

Watch the racing from Homestead, FL, on Sunday, November 17th, on ESPN at 3:00 PM Eastern, or tune into MRN/SiriusXM Radio Channel 90.

Qualifying is Friday, November 15th at 6:10 PM on ESPN 2 or listen live online at motorracingnetwork.com. Happy Hour airs Saturday, November 16th at 3 PM on Fox Sports 2.

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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