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## **MASTERFUL DRIVE BY MEARS NETS TOP 10 FINISH FOR GEICO TEAM AT DAYTONA 500**

Daytona Beach, FL (February 23, 2014) – Casey Mears recorded an exciting Speedweeks, as he dodged crashing racecars, fuel cell issues and, on Sunday, Mother Nature and more racecars. After misfortune took pleasant turns during Daytona 500 practice on Wednesday and the Duel 150's on Thursday, Mears and his GEICO team hoped to capitalize when the Daytona 500 went green on Sunday afternoon.

Race morning presented bright sunshine and clear skies, allowing Mears to visit with

fans and sign autographs at the GEICO display in the midway. Unfortunately, as driver introductions got underway and the start of the race grew closer, skies became gray and teams became concerned with impending weather, which could affect the outcome of the Great American Race.

Mears rolled off 28th when the green flag turned the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series field loose for the first race of the 2014 season. Speedweeks proved the strength of Mears' #13 GEICO Chevrolet SS, so it was of little surprise when he broke into the top 20 on lap seven. When Kyle Larson brought out the caution with a single-car spin on lap 22, Mears delivered his GEICO machine to the attention of the Germain Racing pit crew, who quickly outfitted it with right-side tires and fuel before returning him to the racing surface five spots to the good, in the 15th position. He wouldn't get to enjoy the ride for much longer as raindrops began to fall, causing the red flag to halt the field on lap 38.

It would take nearly 6 ½ hours before the weather cleared and allowed the Daytona 500 to continue. A packed house was on hand when the race restarted at 8:52 PM (ET). Mears restarted in the 12th position when the race went back to green on lap 46, but he quickly pedaled the #13 GEICO Chevrolet SS forward and penetrated the top five when he moved into fourth on lap 53. Just 20 laps later, he was riding in the second position before surrendering to a scheduled green flag pit stop on lap 78.

As the race wore on, Mears continued his moonlight job as an escape artist and narrowly avoided three different crashes that very nearly ended his long day at Daytona International Speedway. After surviving a practice incident on Wednesday that saw the Germain Racing crew working hard to repair the front end of his GEICO car, Mears' fenders would be shown no mercy as the race began to intensify on Sunday evening. Even the commentators on the television broadcast noted his ability to avoid peril by the narrowest of margins.

With just 13 laps left in the advertised distance, Mears and his #13 GEICO Chevy sat solidly in the 8th position before lap 192 saw him and the Gecko stuck in the middle with no help, shuffling him ten spots back to 18th. The final caution of the day slowed the field after Mears was forced to wipe the sweat from his brow after using cat-like reflexes to avoid being collected in a six-car crash with only six laps to go.

Mears had his work cut out for him after restarting 16th in green-white-checker conditions. He picked up a single spot by the time he took the white flag, but turned up the heat on the final lap. The Bakersfield, CA, native piloted his #13 GEICO Chevrolet to the front and survived contact from a crashing group of racecars in a last lap melee as the field approached the checkered flag. After putting in a full day's work and participating in his own version of 'Survivor', Mears' patience, sharp reflexes and quick-action throughout the evening resulted in a 10th place finish in the 56th running of the Daytona 500.

"I'm just so happy for the guys on this GEICO team because they worked really hard during the off-season to make the conversion to Chevrolet and build the new relationship with Richard Childress Racing (Germain Racing's technical partner). They were logging some pretty heavy hours away from their families, so it's great to see smiles on their faces tonight," Mears said after exiting his #13 GEICO Chevrolet SS. "It's exciting to think about where we started and how great it's been to have GEICO as our partner, and have a dedicated owner like Bob Germain. They're both so involved in what we're doing and believe in our team. Now, with KMC Wheels on-board, we've added another sponsor that is excited about our program. Each year we've gotten a lot better and I'm glad the 2014 season is off to a strong start."

He continued, "It's always nice to walk away from the Daytona 500 with a top ten finish and give our sponsors and team owner something to be excited about. I just can't thank GEICO and Bob Germain enough for giving us the opportunity to come out here and race each week."

Mears and company will now pack up the #13 GEICO Chevrolet SS and head out west to Phoenix for the beginning of a west coast trip that will see them in the region for three of the next four races.

Mears and the #13 GEICO Chevrolet SS will hit the track at Phoenix International Raceway for the opening practice session on Friday, February 28th, at 2:00 PM (ET). Qualifying will follow at 6:40 PM (ET).

The Profit on CNBC 500 presented by Small Business Fueling America NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, March 2nd, and it will be televised live on FOX beginning at 3:00 PM (ET). The Motor Racing Network (MRN) will carry the live radio broadcast.

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