

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **RESILIENT MEARS RALLIES BACK IN FONTANA TO SCORE TOP 15 FINISH**

Fontana, CA (March 23, 2014) - When Germain Racing loaded up the No. 13 GEICO Chevrolet SS and headed out west for the third time in four weeks, they were looking to rebound from tough races in Las Vegas and Bristol. After posting a top 10 finish at the Daytona 500, they recorded a strong 14th place finish in Phoenix, but suffered setbacks at the next two NASCAR Sprint Cup Series events.

When practice got underway on Friday in Fontana, CA, Casey Mears and his No. 13 GEICO Chevrolet SS ended up 25th on the board when the session concluded.

Qualifying presented a bit of a challenge when the Bakersfield, CA

, native navigated the 2-mile oval in 39.220-seconds at a speed of 183.580-miles per hour and ended up 31st on Sunday's starting grid.

Mears shook it off and returned to the track on Saturday morning and immediately shot up the speed charts, where he was sitting in the 13th position when practice session number two came to a close.

With a strong practice session under their belts, the GEICO team looked forward to the 400-mile event when they arrived for race day on Sunday morning. Mears and his GEICO Chevrolet SS rolled off of the starting grid 31st, but he had gained ten positions and sat in the 21st position when the race's first caution flag was displayed for debris on lap 18.

Mears reported handling issues early on, but crew chief Bootie Barker reassured his driver under caution when he said, "That was a good run, Casey.

Most cars fell off during that run, but you didn't."

Mears visited pit road for four tires, fuel and a wedge adjustment before restarting the race from the 17th position on lap 23.

As the race wore on, Mears continued to battle an ill-handling racecar, often times finding himself sideways as he exited the turns. Each caution period allowed the GEICO crew to work on the car and their efforts began to pay off. Mears was running in the 22nd position on lap 68 when he reported: "I'm loose all the way off, but it definitely turns better into the center."

Coming down to the final laps, Mears had worked his No. 13 GEICO Chevrolet SS into the top 20 and began to closely eye a top 15 finish.

Unfortunately, during a day that saw many drivers with flat tires, Mears notified Barker of a vibration, which sent the Germain Racing pit crew scrambling to get in position in the event the GEICO Chevy would need to travel down pit road. Just three laps later, Clint Bowyer spun out in turn four, bringing out the yellow flag and allowing Mears the opportunity to bring his No. 13 GEICO car to the attention of his pit crew, who quickly outfitted him with four fresh tires and a splash of fuel. The caution flag had been displayed with just two laps remaining in the race, so the field would prepare for what was sure to be a wild Green-White-Checker finish.

Mears restarted 16th when the green flag set the field underway for the final time. After surviving a chaotic restart, which included four-wide racing, he was able to pick up a spot and hustle the GEICO Chevy across the finish line in the 15th position, accounting for the team's third top 15 finish in the first five races of the season.

When Mears arrived in the garage after taking the checkered flag, it was discovered that he had completed the final lap on a flat left rear tire.

"I'm really proud of the guys on this GEICO team today because we struggled with the car, but everyone kept working really hard and it paid off in the end. It was a wild race, but we kept making changes and we survived it and were able to get a top 15 finish," Mears said at his hauler after the race. "It was a

busy weekend and Bootie (Barker, crew chief) and the guys did a nice job of finding speed and we seemed to get better as the weekend went along.

It's good to have races like this one where you work really hard and earn a good finish, it gives the team confidence and will definitely pay off as the season goes on.

I'm looking forward to getting our No. 13 GEICO Chevrolet SS on-track in Martinsville next week.

It's a fun race and an opportunity for us to sneak out of there with a good finish."

Today's 15th place finish helps Mears jump one position in the Driver Point standings to 18th, where he now sits just six points removed from the top 15. Team owner, Bob Germain, enjoys the same status in the Owner Point standings.

Next week will find Mears and Germain Racing closer to home when they head to the 0.526-mile paperclip-shaped oval in Martinsville, VA, for their second short-track race in three weeks. The team has experienced relative success at the Virginia racetrack, registering top 25 finishes in each of their last five visits.

Casey Mears and the No. 13 GEICO Chevrolet SS will hit the track at Martinsville Speedway for the weekend's opening practice session on Friday, March 28th, at 12:00 PM (ET). Qualifying will follow at 4:40 PM (ET).

The STP 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race is on Sunday, March 30th, and it will be televised live on FOX beginning at 1:00 PM (ET). The Motor Racing Network (MRN) will carry the live radio broadcast, along with SiriusXM NASCAR Radio, channel 90.

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