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Paul Menard's Runner-Up Finish at Richmond Moves the No. 33 Team to Second in Owner's Point Battle

RICHMOND, Va. (April 30, 2011) — Paul Menard climbed behind the wheel of the No. 33 Kevin Harvick Inc. (KHI) Chevrolet Impala for the second time this season at Richmond (Va.) International Raceway, and with a second-place finish, moved the team up two positions to second in the NASCAR Nationwide Series Owner's Point battle.

Menard qualified the No. 33 Menards Chevrolet in the sixth position for the start of the Friday night race at the Virginia short track. When the green flag waved signaling the beginning of the 250-lap contest, Menard fought to maintain his starting position on the outside line but was shuffled back to 11th. However, the driver's slide out of the top-10 was short lived, and by lap 25 he was running in the ninth position.

As the Wisconsin native settled back into the top 10, he relayed to crew chief David Hyder that the No. 33 KHI machine was a little tight in the center, but was handling well overall around the 0.75-mile oval. Along with the leaders, Hyder brought Menard down pit road for a scheduled green-flag pit stop at lap 100. Running in the fifth position prior to the trip to pit road, the Menards crew went with a quick stop for four tires and fuel, opting for no changes to the Chevrolet. Menard returned to the track in the seventh position but was quickly up to the fourth place by lap 110.

The field was slowed for the first caution of the night at lap 124. When the yellow waved, Menard was holding the fifth position. The driver relayed to his crew that the No. 33 Chevrolet was a touch free on both entry and exit of the turns. Taking advantage of the caution, Hyder brought Menard down pit road for four tires, fuel and a chassis adjustment to help resolve the free condition the driver had reported. A solid stop by the KHI team put the No. 33 in the fourth position for the lap 131 restart.

Back to green-flag racing, Menard, running on the outside, engaged in a three-wide battle through turns one and two. Shuffling back slightly to fifth, he worked his way to the inside line and was quickly able to power his way to the third position by lap 141.

Menard kept pushing the No. 33 Menards Chevrolet on a path to the front of the field. At lap 168, he made the move to second position. Menard fought to keep his track position, but at lap 192 slipped back to fourth.

As the event crossed over the 200-lap mark, Menard radioed to Hyder and his team that the KHI Chevrolet was tight in the center of the turns but loose on exit. The team had planned for a lap 238 green-flag stop, but Hyder made the quick call for Menard to come early at lap 215 in an effort to put the team in position for the win. The crew bolted on four tires and added fuel in addition to minor chassis and air-pressure adjustments to help alleviate the handling issues Menard had relayed before the stop.

Following the quick stop, Menard rejoined the field and resumed his charge to the front. With 10 laps to go in the event, the driver of the No. 33 had muscled his way to the fourth position with the race leader in sight. However, the stretch to the checkered flag was interrupted when the second caution of the night flew with just eight laps remaining. Hyder brought Menard to pit road for four tires and fuel, and another solid stop by the Menards crew put the driver in the second position for what would be a green-white-checkered finish.

When the field was brought back to green-flag conditions for the final time, Menard worked hard on the restart to power past race leader Denny Hamlin. Just as the two came to the white flag, an accident between turns three and four brought out the yellow flag, and with it, the end of the event.

The second-place finish pushes the No. 33 KHI team up two positions to second in the NASCAR Nationwide Series Owner's Point standings, 30 markers out of first. The series heads to Darlington (S.C.) Raceway for another Friday night showdown on May 6. Tune in to ESPN2 at 7:30 p.m. EST and 7:15 p.m. on MRN as Clint Bowyer and the No. 33 Rheem Chevrolet team race for the win.

RACE RECAP:

April 29, 2011

Richmond International Raceway

Race: 9 of 34

Started: 6th

Finished: 2nd

Owner's Point Standings: 2nd (-30)

Up Next on the Nationwide Series Schedule:

Date: May 6, 2011

Track: Darlington Raceway

Driver: Clint Bowyer

Event Name: Royal Purple 200

Broadcast: ESPN2 7:30 p.m. EST,

MRN 7:15 p.m. EST

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