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RACE REPORT

PAUL MENARD PEAK/MENARDS CHEVROLET

PHOENIX INT'L RACEWAY

NOVEMBER 13, 2011

Top-10 Finish for Menard and the No. 27 Peak/Menards Team at Phoenix

Richard Childress Racing's Paul Menard recorded his best finish at Phoenix International Raceway with his ninth-place result in Sunday's Kobalt Tools 500. Despite a light rain that blanketed the Avondale, Ariz. area in the morning hours, the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series was able to start the 312-lap event on schedule with the No. 27 Peak/Menards Chevrolet in the 11th position as the 43-car field took the green flag. Menard climbed as high as eighth before settling just outside the top 10 in the 11th position. During the lap-40 competition caution period mandated by NASCAR, he reported to crew chief Slugger Labbe the bright yellow machine was a little tight. Menard hit pit road for four Goodyear tires, a full tank of Sunoco fuel, chassis and air pressure adjustments on lap 41. With many teams opting to take only two tires, the No. 27 team restarted mid-pack in 19th on lap 45. The Eau Claire, Wis., native remained in the top 20, reporting his Chevrolet Impala started out extremely free, but was more balanced at the end of green-flag runs. The No. 27 Chevrolet was entering pit road for service on lap 159 under green-flag conditions when the yellow flag was again displayed. Menard bypassed his pit stall in hopes of staying ahead of the leader, but was trapped one lap down. He returned to pit road for air pressure and track bar adjustments. The Peak/Menards Chevrolet restarted in the 24th position when the field returned to green-flag racing on lap 164 and was scored the first car one lap down to the leader. When the yellow flag was displayed five laps later, the 31-year-old driver was the recipient of the "Lucky Dog" award and returned to the lead lap. Menard climbed back into the top 20 following a spotless lap-179 pit stop while under caution, restarting in the 18th position on lap 182. Labbe's two-tire call during a lap-221 visit to pit road launched the No. 27 machine from the 18th position to second for the lap-225 restart. For the remainder of the event, Menard continued to battle a loose-off condition, but maintained position in the top 10, taking the checkered flag in ninth and scoring his eighth top-10 of the 2011 season.

Start – 11

Finish – 9

Laps Led – 0

Points – 18

PAUL MENARD QUOTES:

"This Peak/Menards team did a great job all weekend. The car just got better and better on Friday, and we thought we had a shot at the pole position after final practice. The track was very different on Saturday. It slowed down a lot and we were really loose. We had no idea what to expect during the race, especially with the rain that rolled through here (Phoenix International Raceway). This is our first top 10 on a flat track as a team, so that was a solid accomplishment for us. We typically struggle on tracks like this, so to hit on something and have a solid weekend at Phoenix is very important. We'll carry that with us into next season."

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