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RACE REPORT

PAUL MENARD

CERTAINTEED/MENARDS CHEVROLET

CHARLOTTE MOTOR SPEEDWAY

OCTOBER 15, 2011

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Paul Menard and the No. 27 CertainTeed/Menards Team Victims of Ill-timed Cautions; Finish 17th at Charlotte Motor Speedway

Paul Menard started the No. 27 CertainTeed/Menards Chevrolet from the seventh position in Saturday night's NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race under the lights at Charlotte Motor Speedway, and finished 17th despite getting caught laps down to the leader with ill-timed caution periods falling immediately after green-flag pit stops. During the first run of the 500 miler, Menard battled a tight-handling machine and fell back to the 12th position. When he brought the No. 27 Chevrolet Impala to pit road on lap 43 for the first green-flag pit stop of the evening, crew chief Slugger Labbe called for four fresh Goodyear tires, a full tank of Sunoco E-15 fuel and a spring rubber removed from the left-rear spring to counter the tight condition. The result was a much-improved Chevrolet that only tightened up late in the ensuing long run. A caution for debris on lap 77 allowed the CertainTeed/Menards team the opportunity to make air pressure and chassis adjustments which, unfortunately, freed the car's balance too much, causing Menard to fall as far back as 23rd in the running order with the loose-handling machine. Over the next 150 laps, Menard regained track position, running as high as 15th before settling in the 16th spot. The No. 27 team continued to make small air pressure and chassis adjustments, getting the car's handling balanced for the Eau Claire, Wis., native. Following the lap 236 green-flag pit stop, the yellow flag was displayed only two laps later, trapping the 2011 Brickyard 400 winner two laps down to the leader who had not yet visited pit road. Menard restarted 17th and regained one lap as he took the wave around. To add insult to injury, it happened again on lap 287, with the caution flag appearing for fluid on the racing surface just as Menard returned to the track following another green-flag pit stop. Menard remained trapped a lap down through the end of the 334-lap race and, after falling back to 20th on a lap-303 restart, powered back to take the checkered flag in the 17th position.

Start – 7 Finish – 17 Laps Led – 0 Points – 21

PAUL MENARD QUOTES:

"We had a pretty solid car tonight and Slugger (Labbe, crew chief) and the No. 27 CertainTeed/Menards team did a good job adjusting on the handling as the race progressed. We just had bad luck getting caught two laps down when the caution flag came out after a green-flag stop. What's crazy is that it happened twice with back-to-back green-flag stops. That was frustrating and at that point, we were just ready for the checkered flag to fly."

