

RACE REPORT

PAUL MENARD

PEAK/MENARDS CHEVROLET

DAYTONA INT'L SPEEDWAY

FEBRUARY 20, 2011



Paul Menard and the No. 27 PEAK/Menards Team Collect Top-10 Honors in Daytona 500

Richard Childress Racing's newest team showcased their talents at Daytona International Speedway and proved that they intend to be a force to be reckoned with by demonstrating a solid performance and bringing home a ninth-place finish in the 2011 Daytona 500. Menard lined up the No. 27 PEAK/Menards Chevrolet in the 19th position to kick off the "Great American Race." With the first 11 laps slowed for two cautions, forward progress for the PEAK Impala was difficult; however, following the second yellow flag, the Eau Claire, Wis., native found a drafting partner in Tony Stewart and the pair powered their Chevrolets to the front, taking the lead for the first time on lap 18. Menard remained inside the top 10 while drafting with a number of different drivers for the next 60 laps, falling out only once after a four-tire pit stop on lap 33. He found himself in the lead again on lap 37 while working with RCR teammate Clint Bowyer, and again on lap 52. Following a lap-77 visit to pit road while under the seventh caution of the afternoon, Menard was separated from his recent successful drafting partner and was shuffled backwards. Near the halfway point, he was reunited with Bowyer and the pair powered forward once again. Proving they were a forceful combination, they charged into the lead once again. Following the lap-182 caution, spotters scrambled to negotiate who-was-drafting-with-who for the final shoot-out. Separated from his teammate and without a solid dancing partner to work with, Menard found himself slipping out of the top 10. His position allowed him to navigate around a late-race incident that collected the front-running cars and set the stage for a green-white-checked finish. In the final laps, Menard powered his No. 27 PEAK/Menards Chevrolet to a top-10 finish in the season opener.

Start – 19th

Finish – 9th

Laps Led – 11

Points – 8th

PAUL MENARD QUOTE:

"We had a really strong PEAK/Menards Chevrolet at Daytona. The guys have worked incredibly hard to prepare for this season and I think we have showed that since we've been down here. We were keeping a close eye on our temperatures after the (No.) 29 and (No.) 31 had engine problems. We ran a solid race and kept out of trouble. We ran well with Clint (Bowyer) and were able to lead laps today – just not the most important lap. The key was finding the right drafting partner, someone who had a strong car and who could work with you, swapping spots to keep the temperatures down. We had a several great drafting partners today; we just didn't have that combination to keep us in the front at the end. I'm still very proud of our finish and look forward to the season with the No. 27 guys and my RCR teammates."

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@RCR27PMenard
@RCRRacing

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PaulMenard27

