

# 27

# RACE REPORT

## PAUL MENARD

## SYLVANIA/MENARDS CHEVROLET

KENTUCKY SPEEDWAY

JULY 9, 2011

### The No. 27 Sylvania/Menards Chevrolet Team Finishes 24<sup>th</sup> at Kentucky

The inaugural NASCAR Sprint Cup Series weekend at Kentucky Speedway was shaping up to be a solid one for the No. 27 Sylvania/Menards team, but an untimely caution during green-flag pit stops and front-end damage during a late restart relegated Paul Menard to a 24<sup>th</sup>-place finish. After posting fast lap times during Thursday's test session and Friday's rain-delayed Happy Hour, they headed into qualifying with high expectations. A summer shower halted qualifying on Friday afternoon, forcing the starting lineup for the Quaker State 400 to be set by practice speeds, putting the newest addition to the Richard Childress Racing stable of drivers in 10<sup>th</sup> position to start the Saturday night event. Menard battled with a loose-in and tight-center condition in the early laps, but never fell below the 12<sup>th</sup> spot. A competition caution on lap 30 gave the Slugger Labbe-led crew the opportunity to make air pressure adjustments during their two-tire pit stop. The No. 27 team continued to tweak the car's handling with additional adjustments during two subsequent green-flag pit stop cycles. As the race approached the halfway point, Menard reported that he still needed a little better front turn, but felt that the track was starting to come to him. As teams cycled through their second set of green-flag pit stops, the caution flag was displayed. The cars that had already visited pit road, including the Sylvania/Menards Chevrolet, were trapped a lap down to the leader. Labbe took the wave around option, returning Menard to the lead lap, but restarting deep in the field in 18<sup>th</sup> on lap 209. When one of the lead cars lagged on the restart, it caused the drivers behind to check up. During this chain reaction, the No. 27 Chevrolet made hard contact with the rear bumper of the No. 16 entry, resulting in substantial front-end damage and creating a tight-handling condition. Throughout the remaining laps, Menard fell to as low as 28<sup>th</sup> before climbing back to a 24<sup>th</sup>-place result.

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Start – 10<sup>th</sup>

Finish – 24<sup>th</sup>

Laps Led – 0

Points – 16<sup>th</sup>

#### PAUL MENARD QUOTE:

"This just was not the night we had hoped for. Track position is way too important here and we lost that when the caution fell during the green-flag cycles. This Sylvania/Menards team works hard and never gives up so we'll just focus on heading to New Hampshire (Motor Speedway) next weekend."

