

NEWS from TEAM

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Andrés Méndez brought Team GDT's No. 53 home in one piece in his first oval-track race ever May 26 at Lucas Oil Raceway. He'll tackle Iowa Speedway this weekend.

(Star Mazda photo by Eric McCombs)

Team GDT's Méndez Set to Tackle Iowa Speedway

NEWTON, Iowa, June 20 — Team GDT's Andrés Méndez is from Colombia.

Not Columbia, Iowa, which is about 40 miles from Iowa Speedway, where Méndez will be racing this weekend, but the country of Colombia.

Bogotá, to be exact.

The 19-year-old is experiencing a completely different world and a completely different type of racing this year as he competes in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, which is part of the Mazda Road to Indy program.

Saturday's Star Mazda race at Iowa Speedway will be only his second oval-track race ever, but he's committed to learning as much as possi-

ble about oval-track racing in his quest to become an IZOD IndyCar Series driver someday.

The IZOD IndyCar Series races on street courses, road courses and ovals, but Méndez hasn't forgotten that the star jewel of that series, the Indianapolis 500, is still held on an oval track.

Developing a good set-up and feel-

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Photos may be downloaded off Team GDT's Facebook page.



ing comfortable racing so close to other drivers and to the wall is a tall order for anyone, let alone a rookie to whom English is a second language.

Méndez has never even been to Iowa before this weekend, let alone competed on Iowa Speedway's seven-eighths-mile, semi-banked oval.

His goal in his first oval-track race last month was simply to finish. He accomplished that by coming in 12th in the Star Mazda portion of the Night Before the 500 May 26 at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, which gave both his level of experience and his confidence level a boost.

Now he wants to better those results at Iowa Speedway in the Team GDT No. 53, which is sponsored by DataFile Internacional S.A. and Grupo Kriterion.

Méndez has consistently been one of the drivers who records the most number of laps in practice sessions the Star Mazda series has held this year on an oval track. He knows that nothing beats experience, and experience is what he wants most.

“My goals are to keep learning and getting better and better,” he said. “I want to be running at the finish of the race first, but I also want to try to get a top-eight finish or better this time.

“I will be concentrating on working with my engineer, Eric Purcell, and

my coach, Chuck West, to get a good set-up for the race,” he added.

“I really don't know what to expect because it's my first time in Iowa,” he added. “All I've heard is that it's a good track with a bump in one of the corners.”

Méndez will try to find that bump — and then avoid it — when the first of two 30-minute practice sessions is held at 12:45 p.m. Friday afternoon. The second practice session is at 3:30 p.m. Friday. The teams will get almost another hour of practice on Saturday at 11 a.m. before time trials are held at 3:10 p.m. Saturday afternoon. The race itself follows at 5:20 p.m. Saturday. All times are Central.

Méndez will tape the Mazda Motorsports Hour on the Velocity Network at noon Eastern time on Saturday to see its coverage of the Night Before the 500 race. The Iowa Star Mazda race is scheduled to be broadcast on the same program at noon Eastern on Saturday, July 28. The races are also shown on ESPN International and Rogers SportNet in Canada. Broadcast times are posted on StarMazda.com when they're available.

In other team news, Team GDT expects to field three cars for Méndez, Ryan Tveter and Corey Lewis at the next Star Mazda event at Honda Indy Toronto July 6-8. RogersTV is partnering with Tveter for a special promotion where fans who live in Ontario, Canada can win a behind-the-scenes experience at that event. See RogersTV.com/indy for more

information.

Fans can learn more about Team GDT on its Facebook page or through Twitter @TeamGDT. Méndez also has a Facebook page and a Twitter account as well as a Web site at AndresMéndez.com.

About Team GDT:

Team GDT is a multi-car professional race team headquartered in Dallas that is owned by businessman and racing driver J.W. Roberts. The team focuses on the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, the second step in the IZOD IndyCar Series' Mazda Road to Indy, and the IMSA GT3 Cup Challenge.

In 2011 Team GDT won its second Star Mazda Expert Series championship in a row with Roberts behind the wheel. The Expert Series is a race-within-a-race and a championship-within-a-championship for drivers 30 and older. Roberts won the Expert title driving his Team GDT/General Data Tech Mazda No. 65 with a total of five class victories.

Team GDT is also well known for nurturing rising stars, including Motorsport Ireland “Young Racing Driver of the Year” Patrick McKenna and multi-Star Mazda race winners Alex Ardoin and Richard Kent. This year it is fielding Star Mazda cars for rookies Andrés Méndez and Ryan Tveter. Fans can learn more about Team GDT on its Facebook page or through Twitter @TeamGDT.