

NEWS from TEAM

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Team GDT's Ryan Tveter finished fifth in Saturday's Star Mazda race at Edmonton Indy.

(Star Mazda photo by Eric McCombs)

Team GDT's Tveter Gets a Fifth and a 10th In Star Mazda Doubleheader at Edmonton; Méndez Finishes 11th on Saturday

EDMONTON, Alberta, Canada, July 22 — Team GDT's Ryan Tveter recorded his best series results to date in the doubleheader for the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear Saturday and Sunday at City Centre Raceway, the temporary airport street course used for Edmonton Indy.

Tveter finished fifth in Saturday's race and tenth in Sunday's race with

his No. 33, which advertises Rogers TV and Motorola Mobility Canada.

Andres Méndez, who drives the Dallas-based team's No. 53 sponsored by DataFile Internacional S.A. and Grupo Kriterion, finished 11th on Saturday on the 3.631-kilometer/2.256-mile, 13-turn track. He crossed the line in eighth place in Sunday's 45-minute race, but unfortunately he was disqualified from

that race when his car did not meet its weight requirements in the post-race technical inspection.

Both Tveter, of Oyster Bay, N.Y., and Méndez, of Bogotá, Colombia, are rookies in this Mazda Road to Indy series. It was their first visit to Edmonton, and the series' first appearance there as well.

Saturday's race was a wild one due

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Photos may be downloaded off Star Mazda's Facebook page.



to rain, which started as a sprinkle but progressively developed into a deluge at the end of the event's 30-minute time span. It was only Tvester's fifth Star Mazda start ever and he started way back in 16th position, but it developed into a truly memorable run.

He had a great standing start, as he was tenth by the end of lap one after he got around Zack Meyer, Ashley Freiberg, Connor De Phillippi, Diego Ferreira and Stefan Rzadzinski. He moved up two more spots to eighth by lap two when Bruno Palli fell back and Tvester got around the eventual winner, Camilo Schmidt. Then trouble struck Tvester too when he was hit by another driver and spun on the wet track, which put him back to 15th place on lap three.

There was nothing to do but regroup. Tvester got one spot back on lap five and he advanced two more positions to 12th on lap six when he passed Méndez and De Phillippi. The first full-course yellow waved on lap nine. At that point Tvester dashed into the pits for rain tires, and he got in and out of the pits very quickly thanks to the fast work of Team GDT.

He was ready for another exciting restart on the event's only other green-flag lap, lap 13.

To say it went well is putting it mildly, as Tvester was able to advance from 12th to sixth place on the scoring monitor by vaulting ahead of Zach Veach, Freiberg, Carlos Linares, Jack Hawksworth and Gus-

tavo Menezes when some drivers crashed or spun or Tvester passed some of them outright despite the blinding conditions. The yellow waved again at that point and the final two laps were run under a full-course yellow, with Schmidt winning Round 9 over Sage Karam and Gabby Chaves. One driver passed Tvester under that full-course yellow, so when the standings were reviewed later Tvester was awarded a fifth-place finish.

Méndez started 18th on Saturday. He also had a good standing start, advancing to 14th position before lap one was in the books. He ran in 13th or 14th place during most of the early going until he was able to vault into eighth place due to the attrition that brought out the first full-course caution and for drivers who pitted under that caution for rain tires. Then Méndez pitted for rains under that yellow too, which dropped him back to 13th place, but he was able to regroup to 11th at the checkered.

Both Tvester and Méndez posted their fastest race laps on lap seven of Saturday's race. Tvester's was a 1:36.648 and Méndez had a 1:38.365.

The weather was better on Sunday and the action was less volatile. Hawksworth, the polesitter, led every lap and Karam and Chaves finished second and third again. The field got spread out without any early yellows, but two late cautions closed the field up and offered some additional opportunities to pass.

It was a long race for Tvester. He started 13th but he advanced to 11th on the first lap after Juan Piedrahita and Menezes had problems. Tvester had problems in the early going too, because he was hit during the always-tight first lap and his car suffered damage to its suspension, wheels and front wing. He fell back to 14th after contact with another driver on lap six, but he advanced to 13th on lap 16 when he passed Méndez. He stayed in 13th or 14th place until he rose to 11th at the end due to some late-race attrition ahead of him. He gained one more spot to finish tenth after his teammate's car was penalized after the race.

Méndez started 16th on Sunday. He spent most of the race in 15th or 16th position. Meyer had an accident in Turn 10 on lap 16 and stopped in Turn 11 to bring out the first yellow with 26 minutes gone and 19 remaining. That moved Méndez up to 14th place and closed up the field.

The green came out on lap 20 with 11 minutes left. Méndez passed his teammate to get one spot and he gained another position when the driver who had been fourth, Veach, spun and hit the wall in Turn 9 to bring out the second full-course caution on lap 21.

There were only 5 minutes left on the clock when the green waved again on lap 24 with Méndez in 12th place. Martin Scuncio, Palli, Schmidt and Ferreira ran into problems at that point in Turn 1, and Méndez took the checkered flag in

eighth place, 1.560 of a second behind Freiberg and 1.537 seconds ahead of Linares. Unfortunately it was all for naught due to the problem in tech later.

Tveter's fastest race lap on Sunday was a 1:31.666 on lap 13. Méndez's was a 1:31.475 on lap 10.

Also of note was the run on Sunday by Menezes, who drives for Team Pelfrey. He borrowed Team GDT's spare car after his regular mount was badly damaged in Saturday's race, and drove it to a fifth-place finish Sunday.

Highlights of the Edmonton Star Mazda races will be broadcast on a taped-delayed basis on the Mazda Motorsports Hour on Discovery's Velocity Network, Canada's Rogers SportsNet and ESPN International. The coverage will air at noon Eastern on Saturday, Aug. 25 in the United States. Check local listings for other areas.

The next event is the Grand Prix of Trois-Rivieres Aug. 3-5.

For more information see the series' Web site at StarMazda.com. Fans can learn more about Team GDT on its Facebook page or through Twitter @TeamGDT. Both Méndez and Tveter also have Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Driver quotes follow:

Ryan Tveter: "Saturday's race went extremely well. I was in the top five, which is a wonderful result.

"It was a crazy race and there were a lot of incidents because of the rain. I had a great standing start. Then another driver hit me and I had a 360-degree spin, but I was able to keep on going.

"I was passed under yellow during the last full-course caution, so I got fifth when the results became official.

"I think if the race would have lasted a few laps more I might have been able to finish even a little higher, because some of the cars that finished ahead of me were still on slicks.

"I got off to a good start in Sunday's race too, but I had some contact with another driver that caused some suspension damage to my car. It happened on the first lap and it was a 45-minute race, so it was a long race for me. Overall it was a good experience though because I brought it home, so I'm happy with that result too.

"I want to thank Team GDT and my partners, Rogers TV and Motorola Mobility Canada. We're really happy, and we hope to carry this momentum on to Trois-Rivieres!"

Andres Méndez: "The first race was crazy with the rain. At the start we decided to keep slicks on. We were moving forward and we were hoping to finish the race on slicks, but then it started to rain harder so we pitted to change to rain tires. We ended up 11th.

"In the other race we were getting closer to the drivers at the front, but with no yellows the field was getting strung out. We finally had a yellow flag and we moved forward to eighth place, but then we had a problem with the car in the post-race technical inspection. It was very unfortunate.

"I want to thank the team, my sponsors and the people that support me."

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, part of 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. Fans can learn more about Team GDT on its Facebook page or through Twitter @TeamGDT.