

NEWS from TEAM

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Team GDT's Andres Méndez (No. 53) and Juan Camilo Acosta (No. 97) in action at Road Atlanta during Friday's season finale of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear.

(Star Mazda photo by Eric McCombs)

Team GDT's Méndez and Acosta Cross Finish Line At Road Atlanta and Start Preparing for 2013

BRASELTON, Ga., Oct. 21 — Andres Méndez concluded his rookie year in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and Juan Camilo Acosta dipped his toes into the water for a possible campaign in 2013 as Team GDT participated in the series' season finale Friday afternoon at Road Atlanta.

Méndez, of Bogotá, Colombia, finished 15th in the race, but more importantly on Saturday morning he was awarded the series' BBS Hard Charger Award at the series' year-

end celebration at the Chateau Elan Winery and Resort. He ended up 14th in the final point standings for his work this year behind the wheel of the No. 53, which is sponsored by DataFile Internacional S.A. and Grupo Kriterion. His best finish in 2012 was a sixth at Trois-Rivières, Quebec in August.

The BBS Hard Charger Award was determined from all 17 races during the season and was presented to the driver who gains the most places in total from the beginning to the end

of the races. The prize, a custom-made coffee table made from a polished BBS wheel and an etched glass top, plus a set of four BBS racing or BBS passenger car wheels, is valued at \$5,000.

Acosta, of Cali, Columbia, finished 13th in his first Star Mazda start ever after testing with the team on the road course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Oct. 10-11. His No. 97 is sponsored by two young women's clothing lines: Studio F and Ela.

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Photos may be downloaded off Star Mazda's Facebook page



Neither Méndez nor Acosta had ever been to Road Atlanta's 2.54-mile (4.088 km), 12-turn road course before this event, which supported the American Le Mans Series' Petit Le Mans.

Méndez qualified 13th and Acosta started 16th for the 50-minute contest.

Ryan Tveter and Ashley Freiberg passed Méndez on the first lap but Méndez got one of those positions back working lap three when Tveter spun. Méndez stayed in 14th place from lap 3 through lap 23 of what turned out to be a 38-lap contest, but then he lost two positions to his teammate and Tveter. He regained one spot with just two laps to go

when Camilo Schmidt ran into problems and he was 15th when the checkered flag waved.

Acosta also moved up one position when Tveter spun, and he ran behind Méndez in 15th position from laps 3 through lap 23. He moved up to 13th at the completion of lap 24 with about 16 minutes remaining by passing both Mendez and Schmidt, and he finished in that position.

"I had an excellent experience and broke the ice with this race for the 2013 season," Acosta said. "I'm getting comfortable with the car and getting better with it. It was a hard track with blind turns, which I'm not accustomed to. I just want to work hard and become an excellent driver

next year; I just want to learn as much as I can and test a lot so I can be competitive. I'm happy to join the Star Mazda family."

Méndez ran his fastest lap of the race on lap 17 and Acosta's best lap was lap 12.

For more information on Team GDT, see its Facebook page and the series' website at StarMazda.com. Méndez's website is at agMéndez.com.

The Road Atlanta Star Mazda race will be broadcast in the United States on the Discovery network's Velocity channel on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 24, at noon Eastern.