

# THE CROW'S NEST

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## Young, local drivers compete in Grand Prix

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At a young age, Hayden Duerson and Nick Andries knew that they wanted to drive in the IndyCar Series. At this year's Honda Grand Prix, they got their chance.

On Friday, March 26, 18-year-old Hayden Duerson from St. Petersburg and 19-year-old Nick Andries from Seminole practiced for the first time in St. Petersburg in the Star Mazda Series.

The Star Mazda Series is the level drivers compete in before going to the IndyCar Series.

Duerson, a senior at Shorecrest Preparatory School drove car 94 for Juncos Racing, based in Vero Beach, Florida and is sponsored by Tampa Bay Endodontics.

Duerson's began watching his father race— first motorcycles, then cars. "When I was about three years old he started racing cars. I always went to the races with him."

"When I was about eight he bought me my own car and I've been racing ever since," Duerson said.

Andries is a full time student at



Photo by Michael Rohloff

St. Petersburg's waterfront provides an attractive backdrop for racing.

St. Petersburg College studying mechanical engineering. He is the driver for car 81 sponsored by Team Pelfrey, Anderson Race Park and Allied based in Palmetto, Florida.

"I was five years old when I started racing," Andries said. His younger cousin got him started in racing.

He said that his cousin was driving a go-cart around a parking lot and asked him if he wanted to drive it. "I tried it out and just stuck with it," Andries

said.

"This is the first time that I have gotten to race at this event; it's exciting," Andries said.

Majoring in mechanical engineering will teach Andries the other side of IndyCar. Duerson said that he spent three months with his team and during that time they taught him how to fix his car.

"I would like to go to college," Duerson said. "After I get a job I

would like to one day have a team." He chose Pre-Med as his major for college.

"I figured that should give me enough money to do it," Duerson said.

To train for a race, Andries says that he drives a lot on asphalt in order to practice on sharp turns and passing.

Practicing with simulators is also a good way for drivers to get comfortable with a race track without having to travel to it.

Andries said "I Racing" is a good simulator because you can learn the configuration before going to a track.

"The simulators are really popular now. The track and the cars are pretty accurate," Andries said.

Preparation and practice is key to being successful in any career path. Andries said that he prepares for a race by going to the gym five days a week for three hours and practices by driving on a track.

Duerson placed 20th and Andries placed 21st in the Star Mazda Championship race.

If you would like to follow the rest of Hayden Duerson and Nick Andries' season with Star Mazda, go to [www.starmazda.com/index.htm](http://www.starmazda.com/index.htm).

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