

Mack Daddy

Morehouse alumnus was ready for first Indianapolis 500

BY HERBERT L. WHITE
CONSOLIDATED MEDIA GROUP

George Mack wasn't happy about where he would start in the recent Indianapolis 500.

But he was glad to be in the race.

Mack, a rookie Indy Racing League driver, qualified in the middle of row 11 for the race. It wasn't the result he expected, but he said it would work.

"I'm not pleased with where I'm starting, but it's in the field," he said. "I'm sure the guy who's on the pole (Bruno Junqueira) thought he could've done better than 231 miles an hour. We're all competitors and close to perfectionists and that's why we're all here."

Mack had to endure some adversity in order to make the 33-car field. First, there was a case of vertigo that limited

his practice time. Then there was a blown engine on the last day of practice. But everything worked out when he piloted his Chevrolet-powered G Force around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway at an average of 227.150 miles an hour to become the second black driver to qualify for the race. Still, the historical significance hasn't hit home.

"No, not yet," Mack said. "I kind of take things one day at a time. People have talked to me about it, and I see it in the paper. I dig all that, but it hasn't sunk in yet."

Mack's attention now was on race strategy. The 500-mile race requires endurance from car and driver, so his 310 Racing team was trying to focus on putting Mack in contention in the latter stages. The weather would also determine how the race

would be contested. Rain had been persistent in Indianapolis throughout the month, which could determine how cars handle or who wins in case of a shortened race.

"We won't talk about (strategy) until later, but we'll probably try to make up spots during the pit stops," he said. "The race doesn't really start until the last 100 laps anyway, so there's going to be some attrition; there's going to be some wrecks. You have to be able to stay

George Mack is the second African American to qualify for the Indianapolis 500.



Tiny Vikings football looking for players, cheerleaders, coaches

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Tiny Vikings football program will hold registrations for cheerleaders and football players on June 15 and June 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registrations will be held at the back entrance of Mineral Springs Middle School, 4558 Ogburn Ave.

An original birth certificate, the last report card for the 2001-2002 school year and a

physical dated after April 1, 2002, along with the registration fee are required. The registrations are open to boys and girls aged 5-15 years on or before July 31, 2002.

Lucretia Edwards, the newly appointed director of the cheerleading program, is looking for volunteers to serve as coaches of the Flag, Mighty Mites, Jr. Pee Wees, Pee Wees, Junior Midgets and Senior Midgets teams.

Winston-Salem Falcons to host Cheerleader Fun Day

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Falcons football organization will sponsor a Cheerleader Fun Day on June 8 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. The event will be held at Paisley Middle School, off Thurmond Street in Winston-Salem.

The festivities are open for girls aged 5-15. Everyone is welcome to come out and participate in the event. Anyone

interested in cheering or dancing is urged to come out and enjoy the fun. There will be lots of fun activities and good food.

Football players interested in playing for the Falcons are also welcome to come and sign up at that time. For more information, contact Aileen Dye, girls director, at 759-7711, or Craig Amost, the boys league representative, at 759-9294.

Titans

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11-1 on the season and Crotts has compiled a 7-1 mark to give Pope a strong 1-2 punch.

If either can't go the distance Pope will relieve with Dan Poindexter, Ryan Weavil and Thomas Stamper, in that order.

While pitching is the Titans' strong suit, they have also gotten solid performances on offense throughout the season as well. Brad Bullard and Brad Kessler have both hovered around the .400 mark at the plate. Joe Brewer isn't far back at .380. When it comes to power, West has gotten its share of long balls. Casey Stanley leads the team with six homers, followed by Jess Maloney and Brewer with five each. None was bigger than Maloney's shot, which propelled the Titans to victory over Mount Tabor in the quarterfinal round.

As his team approaches the final days of preparation for the

championship series, Pope said his team needs to keep doing the things it has done all season.

"I feel good about our pitching because we've gotten good pitching all year," said Pope, whose team is 27-2 this season. "What I'm concerned about is hitting. We have to hit the ball."

Against Fuqua-Varina, the Titans will face a team very similar to themselves.

"They're a really good team," Pope said. "They've got good pitching and they hit the ball well. They're solid all around."

Getting this far has been rewarding for Pope.

"I thought we had a shot at it," Pope said. "But you never can expect to make it this far. We knew we had good pitching. Our only question was with our hitting. I felt that if we hit the ball we could go a long way. You've got to be good, lucky and get some breaks to be in position to play for a state championship. So far everything has fell in place."

Rams

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stone, he served as the defensive coordinator at Virginia Union from 1997-99 and Livingstone from 1994-96. He helped recruit many of the Livingstone players who led the Blue Bears to CIAA championships in 1997 and 1998.

open its 2002 football season on Aug. 29 against Division II heavyweight Carson-Newman. The Rams defeated the Eagles in their season-opener last year at Bowman Gray Stadium. However, Carson-Newman is expected to be one of the top offensive teams in the nation in rushing after solidifying its quarterback position after injuries decimated the team early in the 2001 season.

out of trouble.

"Game plans change and strategy changes, so you have to adjust as the race goes on."

Mack, whose best finish this year was 13th at Miami, wasn't trying to get caught up in the hype. Indianapolis, he conceded, isn't just another

race, but the same principles apply: know the track, respect the speed and get to the front.

"You do what you love," he said. "As a professional athlete, you get nervous and anxious, but you don't get all caught up in it."

Although Mack wasn't a favorite to win, he's determined to be competitive in his first 500-mile race. No one has ever won Indy from the back row, but there was always a chance.

"Anything's possible," he said.

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