

## TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT FOR TITLE CHASERS IN SACCS SPECIAL VEHICLE CHAMPIONSHIP

To predict who the 2018 Special Vehicle champions of the South African Cross Country Series (SACCS) will be, is dangerous as the scale can easily tip at the Gold 400, the sixth and final round of the series that takes place on 2 and 3 November at Glenharvie on Gauteng's West Rand.

The father and daughter pair of Coetzee Labuschagne and Sandra Labuschagne-Jonck (4x4 Mega World ARB Porter) have had a consistent season although their results have been up and down. They are, however, still in the running for both the overall and the Class A championship titles despite dropping to second place on the overall standings after the recent Harrismith 400.

The pair are still leading the Class A standings, but only three points ahead of their rivals, John Telford/Victor Ntsheke (Calcamite BAT), is way too close for comfort and they will feel the pressure at the Gold 400. These two teams will also battle it out for the overall title where Telford/Ntsheke lead the Labuschagne pair by a mere two points and no-one can afford to put a wheel wrong.

Consistency has been the name of the game for both teams with Labuschagne/Labuschagne-Jonck starting and finishing each event while Telford/Ntsheke could not finish the Dundee race.

All eyes will be on these two teams, but the results of a few other teams can play an important role in the outcome of the championships. In Class A Stefan van Pletzen/Jaco Pieterse (Live Lesotho Chenoweth) have already won twice this year and they find themselves in the third place on the overall standings. They will aim for a victory and a bag full of points and their result can influence the outcome at the top.

There is no two ways about it, one of the two Live Lesotho teams will round off the overall podium, but it remains to be seen which one it will be as Werner Kennedy/CJ van Pletzen (Porter) trail their team-mates by only 11 points.

The Harrismith 400 winners, Lance Trethewey/Adriaan Roets (BAT) have nothing to lose but will be overjoyed with another overall victory. A good result for them can, however, also determine the final standings in both the overall as the Class A championships and all four leading teams will make sure they know exactly where the KwaZulu-Natal team is during the Gold 400.

It seems the Class P drivers' title will go to Nic Goslar (Zarco) as his rival has not entered the Gold 400. Goslar and navigator, Jose Lima, will give it their all to take the Class P laurels ahead of Keith Makenete/Ntaote Bereng (BAT) and this battle will add even more spice to the rest of the action in the Special Vehicle category.

The Side x Side Interprovincial Challenge title is signed and sealed with Nico du Rand/JG Claassen (Can-Am Maverick) clinching it, but this does not mean that they will not go for a final victory to round off the season. Behind them Werner Mostert/Rob Green (Can-Am Maverick) have locked horns with Peter Walter/Shawn de Villiers (Can-Am Maverick) and their results will determine the final podium standings. Leander Pienaar/Carl Swanepoel (Can-Am Maverick) are not regular contenders, but a good result from them, can cause an upset in the final standings.

The Gold 400 will also form the final round of the Northern Regions championship. This means spectators will be spoiled with action as the large entry will see non-stop racing in the Glenharvie area. Regional competitors will only complete a loop of 200 kilometres.

On Friday, the Qualifying Race of the Gold 400 starts at 14:00 and the results will determine the starting order for the racing section on Saturday. The leading vehicle will take on the 350km race on Saturday at 8:00 with the Start/Finish, the race headquarters as well as the designated service park all situated at the Kloof Club. Entry to the Kloof Club is free of charge and spectators can meet their favourite teams and have posters signed during the compulsory 30-minute service halt before the national competitors tackle the second of the two loops again at 12:00.

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There are various spectator points along the route and entry to these points are also free. Food and refreshments are available at the Kloof Club.

Enthusiasts at the event as well as those who are not able to attend the Gold 400, can follow the racing action on the RallySafe App that can be downloaded for free of charge for iOS and Android devices.

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