

## TOUGH SPECIAL VEHICLE BATTLE BETWEEN KZN TEAMS ON THE CARDS AT BERG 400

A tight battle in the Special Vehicle category is on the cards at the Berg 400, round two of the South African National Cross Country Series (SACCS) that takes place on 17 and 18 May in the Winterton area in KwaZulu-Natal and many eyes will be on two local KwaZulu-Natal crews.

After winning the final two rounds of the 2018 SACCS as well as the opening round of the 2019 series at Dullstroom in March, Lance Trethewey and Adriaan Roets (LT Earthmovers BAT) will be looking to grow their list of victories and to add more silverware to their collection. They will enter the event as the overall leaders in the Special Vehicle category as well as Class A and another good result will put them in a comfortable position going into the third round, the Toyota 1000 Desert Race (TDR 1000) the halfway mark of the 2019 championship.

They can, however, expect tough competition from the Voigts brothers who are also a local KZN team. Ralph has moved in behind the wheel of their Voigts Group BAT with Andre reading the notes this year. These two teams have locked horns before with the Voigts' winning the 2018 Battlefields 400 in Dundee and finishing as runners-up to Trethewey/Roets at the Harrismith 400 last year. Although they missed the season opener this year, they are ready for action and would like nothing better than to finish on the top step of the podium again. A good result will be the perfect motivation for the rest of the season.

Youngsters Taahir and Talha Moosajee (Tyre Rack Stryker) started the season on a positive note and are lying second overall in the Special Vehicle category. Racing runs in the veins of the Moosajee brothers who are always aiming for a good result. Farther Naeem and uncles Rayhaan Bodhanya and Shameer Variawa are cousins who all started their racing careers in the early 2000's.

Naeem Moosajee and Rayhaan Bodhanya were a highly competitive team for many years competing in just short of 50 national championship events, while multiple Special Vehicle champion Shameer Variawa competed earlier this year in the Dakar Rally and now forms part of the Toyota Gazoo Racing SA Hilux team.

Bodhanya now has the youngest competitor in the SACCS next to him in the Tyre Rack Porter, his 18 year old son Lais, in his first year of national championship racing learning the ropes. They could unfortunately not complete the Dullstroom event and will miss the Berg 400 but are eager to put their first points on the scoreboard at their next outing the TDR 1000.

The consistent John Telford and Victor Ntsekhe (Calcamite BAT) will be part and parcel of the fierce competition from their third place in the overall Special Vehicle championship, as will Sandra Labuschagne-Jonck and husband, Jaco Jonck in their Total Agri Porter. The Joncks went back to the drawing board after the season opener where Jaco suffered severely from motion sickness while they also experienced mechanical issues. It is still a learning curve for the reigning SA National Special Vehicle Navigator's Champion Sandra, but the first points are on the scoreboard and they will be on the start line, as enthusiastic as always.

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John Thomson and Maurice Zermatten (Mormond Zarco) will also be looking for their first points of the season and the Berg 400 might be just what they need to get their championship challenge off the ground. It will also be a first outing this season for Dean Bradbury and Rikus Hattingh (Bradbury Logistics BAT Venom).

Nic Goslar and Andrew Massey (SA Clinics Zarco Magnum) will be back in action in Class P as will Keith Makenete and Ntaote Bereng (BAT). Both teams missed the first event and the playing field will be level in their aim for the Class P titles.

With the teams in the Side x Side category now also aiming for national championship titles, fierce competition can be expected. All teams are competing in Can-Am Maverick SxS vehicles and have to complete the full race distance.

The experienced Werner Mostert and his brother, Leon, are the championship leaders and a second victory this season will look good on the scoresheets. Motorcycle rider, Gerry van der Byl, is getting to grips with his new adventure and together with co-driver, Andrew Katay, will be looking to add more points to their tally so far this season. Ashley Bradbury and Timmy Botes are currently third in the standings behind Van der Byl/Katay and they will be aiming for better result and to stay on the podium while they will have to keep an eye on another experienced SxS competitor, Peter Walter and Shaun de Villiers who will be looking to better their fourth place in the standings.

The Berg 400 in the Champagne Valley area at the foothills of the Drakensberg will start on Friday, 17 May at 12:30 with a 64km Qualifying Race. These results will be used to determine the starting order for the main race on Saturday, 18 May that will start at 07:30. The Start/Finish as well as Race Headquarters and the Designated Service Point (DSP) will be situated at the Waffle Hut on the outskirts of Winterton. Food and refreshments will be available during the weekend at the Waffle Hut.

Cross Country enthusiasts can follow the Berg 400 on the RallySafe App that is available for free download for Android and iOS devices.

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