

ROAD TO DAKAR BECKONS AT 2021 TGRSA 1,000 DESERT RACE

The Toyota 1,000 Desert Race, the iconic marathon event on the South African Cross-Country Series (SACCS) calendar, has found a new home for 2021. Additionally, the name has changed to incorporate TOYOTA GAZOO Racing SA, and as such the race will now be known as the TGRSA 1,000 Desert Race. It remains the longest and toughest event on the local calendar, however, and will again offer Dakar hopefuls the opportunity to compete in the Road to Dakar.

This race-within-a-race offers privateer crews the opportunity to win a free entry to the world's toughest automotive race, the Dakar Rally. In 2017 it was Treasury One's Hennie de Klerk who won a free entry to the Dakar Rally, when he was the first of the registered Dakar Challengers to cross the line in Botswana. The Pretoria-based businessman did South Africa proud when he and navigator Gerhard Schutte not only completed the Dakar, but also won the Rookie of the Year Award in their SA-built Volkswagen Amarok.

Winners in 2018 and 2019 were not able to take up the Dakar challenge for various reasons, but this year the Road to Dakar is even more valuable than before. For 2021, the prize will comprise not only a free entry to the Dakar Rally, but it will also include a cash prize of 8,000 euros which will go towards securing the funds necessary to compete in the race.

“The Desert Race has long been seen as the toughest automotive race on the African continent, and as such it is a perfect fit for our Dakar-winning Toyota Hilux race cars,” says Toyota SA Motors Vice-President for Marketing, Glenn Crompton. “It is a point of pride for us as Toyota SA Motors to offer up another stern challenge this month – but also to offer this incredible opportunity for privateer crews to truly make the most of the Desert Race.”

Crews hoping to follow in the footsteps of De Klerk and Schutte need to register for the Road to Dakar before tackling the TGRSA 1,000 Desert Race. The competition is only open to crews who haven’t competed in the Dakar Rally before, and with a value of nearly R650,000, the Road to Dakar may just enable a crew to make it to the start line of the Dakar, come January 2022.

As before, the Road to Dakar is open to all privateers who haven’t previously taken part in the Dakar Rally. The winning competitor can choose to enter the next Dakar or the following one, effectively giving the team a maximum of 18 months to prepare for the race. This means that crews who have previously won the Dakar Challenge or Road to Dakar, but haven’t been able to take up their prize, are eligible to win again in 2021.

This year’s TOYOTA GAZOO Racing SA 1,000 Desert Race will take place on 18-20 June, in a new location around the town Upington in the Northern Cape. Despite

the move to a new area, the race will retain its key characteristics as the only marathon event on the South African Cross-Country calendar: The race distance remains set at 1,000 km; and the race will again take place over a total of three days.

“The Desert Race is the only marathon event on the SACCS calendar, and as such it offers us an unparalleled opportunity to test our Toyota Hilux in conditions that resemble those found on many Dakar stages,” says Toyota Gazoo Racing SA Team Principal, Glyn Hall.

But while the factory team will be in the hunt for overall victory and honing the Toyota Hilux in preparation for Dakar 2022, the Road to Dakar brings a challenge to those crews hoping to bag an entry to the iconic race.

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