

FIVE BACK-TO-BACK VICTORIES AND THE TITLE FOR TRETHEWEY/ROETS WITH TWO RACES TO GO

Five victories after the first five rounds of the 2021 South African National Cross Country Series (SACCS) and the Special Vehicle Championship is in the bag for Lance Trethewey and Adriaan Roets (King Price Xtreme BAT) who also won the championship in 2019. The team were victorious after both round four and five of the recent 4x4 Mega World 400 at Nampo Park outside Bothaville in the Free State and adding the points earned to their tally of the first three events, they have opened up a big enough gap to have secured the overall Special Vehicle Championship as well as the Class A championship with the final two rounds of the season still remaining.

Consistency is the name of the game in the SACCS Special Vehicle Championship and it has paid off for Trethewey/Roets who are one of only four teams to have competed in each round of the 2021 season so far. The team has accumulated 165 points in the overall standings with the current overall runners-up, Cecil and Elardus Larney, on 72 points. The Larney brothers have persevered in their first season competing in the Ride Fox Africa Can-Am Maverick in Class G and have also tackled each of the five rounds and scored points, no matter what was thrown at them.

It has been a baptism by fire for the rookies, and after experiencing mechanical issues at the recent two events in the Free State, Team Larney took a 10 hour penalty in round four and five to fix their SxS in order to finish and score points. This resulted in them moving into the second place on the overall standings, 12 points ahead of Clint Gibson/Alaric Smith (60 points) who missed the two 4x4 Mega World 400 events.

Boela Botes/Jay Pretorius (King Price Xtreme Porter) have also been in action at all five rounds and finished as the runners-up in the Free State on both days. They are fourth on the overall standings (56 points), a mere four points behind Gibson/Smith with 16 points separating them from the Larney brothers. With a 16 point blanket covering the teams in the second, third and fourth places, the battle for the final overall podium positions will continue until the final chequered flag is being waved.

Dean Bradbury (Can-Am Maverick SxS) is fifth in the Special Vehicle Overall Drivers' Championship (47 points) followed by 18-year old Bazil Bezuidenhout (40 points) and 19-year old Kent Rutherford (32 points) in similar SxS vehicles. Bezuidenhout scored points after both rounds in the Free State while Rutherford (Enza Construction Can-Am) could not finish round four and was unable to be on the start line for round five. John Thomson (Zarco Challenger) is eighth (31 points); Nico Du Rand (Can-Am Maverick SxS) is ninth (28 points) and Daniel Retief (Class P CR-T), who only competed in the TGRSA 1000 Desert Race in Upington as well as Lood du Preez (Class A Farmers Meat Stryker) are both on 20 points.

In the Special Vehicle Overall Navigators' Championship, Rikus Hattingh is fifth after navigating for both Bazil and his father, Coenie Bezuidenhout, with Timmy Botes, who sat next to Bradbury, sixth (47 points) and Thomson's navigator, Maurice Zermatten, seventh (31 points). JG Claassen, who teamed up with Du Rand for

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the first two events, is eighth (28 points) while Pieter Karsten, who tackled the desert with Retief and Tiaan Swart who read the notes for Du Preez with the team finishing fifth at round five at Bothaville, both on 20 points.

In the Class A, Class G SxS and Class P championships, competitors get an additional five points for starting a race. This adds a different dimension to the class standings.

The Class A title is safe with Trethewey/Roets (163 points), but behind them the Class A Drivers' and Navigators' Championships look a bit different. The defending champion, Howes (81 points) missed rounds four and five and trail Trethewey by 82 points while Gibson is third (75 points) after also missing this event. Botes (70 points) will be chasing Gibson and Howes with Du Preez (45 points) rounding off the top five. Sandra Labuschagne-Jonck and Jaco Jonck (Moto-Netix KEC Racing) have started three events, but are still looking for that elusive finish.

In the Class A Navigators' Championship, Alaric Smith (75 points) is second behind Roets with Pretorius (70 points) third. Don Thomson scored points with Howes at the first two events and has the same amount of points as Swart (45 points) with Zermatten (41 points) not too far behind.

In the Class G SxS Championship, where all teams compete with the Can-Am Maverick, the Larney brothers are leading (131 points) with a sizeable gap to the rest. In the Drivers' Championship, Bradbury (77 points) is still second after winning the opening round and finishing second at the desert race with youngster Rutherford (74 points) not too far behind in third place. Bazil Bezuidenhout (68 points) will have his eye on the podium with Du Rand (57 points) rounding off the top five.

The Mostert brothers, Werner and Leon (King Price Xtreme) have not had a good season and could only finish the season opener. Werner (43 points) is fifth followed by the winner of round five, Geoff Minnitt (40 points) who finished his first race of the season together with Gerhard Snyman. Coenie Bezuidenhout (20 points) is eighth; Theo Erasmus (15 points) is ninth and Marko Himmel (10 points) rounds off the top 10.

In the Class G Navigators' Championship, Hattingh (88 points) trails Larney by 43 points with Botes (77 points) third and this exciting battle at the front will go down to the wire. Claassen (52 points) is fourth with Mostert (43 points) fifth. The teenager, Kabelo Mokanyane, navigated for Rutherford on three occasions and is sixth (38 points) with Kent's brother Justin, who joined him at the desert race, seventh (36 points). Snyman (30 points) is eighth; Erasmus's navigator Edward Odendaal is ninth (15 points) and Francois Schoonbee, who partnered with Himmel, is 10th (10 points).

In Class P, Retief/Karsten lead the standings (29 points) followed by Willem du Toit/Victor Fincham (CR-T) with 25 points after both teams competed in the TGRSA 1000 Desert Race; Keith and Andrew Makenete (BAT) are third after completing and winning round five at Nampo Park (20 points) and Gary and daughter, Jess Campbell (15 points) are fourth after scoring points at the Sugarbelt 400.

With only two races of the season remaining and only the overall and Class A titles confirmed, anything can still happen. Add to that the return of teams for the popular final two events to shake up the points and an exciting finale is on the cards.

The sixth and penultimate round of the season, the Vryburg 400, will take place on 29 and 30 October in North West province and teams can look forward to an enjoyable desert-like event.

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