



Media Information

## SA RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES GO DOWN-TO-THE-WIRE

The recent event at Nampo Park, the penultimate two rounds of the SA Rally-Raid Championship (SARRC), saw a shake-up in the Overall Production Vehicle Championship as well as in the class championships and with negligible points separating the teams, the final two rounds of the season will be where the titles will be decided.

Giniel de Villiers/Dennis Murphy (Toyota Gazoo Racing SA) led the Overall Production Vehicle Championship before taking on the fourth round in the Free State, but two victories for the defending champions, Henk Lategan/Brett Cummings resulted in the team jumping from third place into the lead (120 points) although only three points now separate them from De Villiers/Murphy in second spot (117 points).

And while these two teams will fight it out at the front, another TGRSA team, Shameer Variawa/Danie Stassen now join them on the podium (87 points) with a fourth TGRSA team, Guy Botterill/Simon Vacy-Lyle, who were second overall going to the Nampo, dropped to fourth place (84 points) despite claiming a runner-up result at the fourth round. An unfortunate accident in round five saw them retiring from the race. The top five positions overall belong to teams in FIA T1+ with Gareth Woolridge/Boyd Dreyer (NWM Ford Castrol Team) moving up from seventh place to fifth (70 points) after finishing fourth on both days in the Free State.

With competitors receiving a bonus of five points for starting a race, the situation does, however, look somewhat different in the FIA T1+ Championship. Here De Villiers/Murphy are still leading (146 points) albeit by a single point with Lategan/Cummings moving from fourth to second position (145 points). This title battle will continue to the bitter end as will the fight for the final FIA T1+ podium position currently filled by Variawa/Stassen (117 points) while Botterill/Vacy-Lyle (115 points), who are fourth, will hope to claim their podium position back. Woolridge/Dreyer (109 points) are fifth and also still in with a chance to finish on the podium.

The Horn brothers, Johan and Werner (#TeamHilux Rally-Raid Toyota) missed the season opener and survived a scare at the fourth round when they rolled their vehicle during the short Pirelli Qualifying Race, but they still scored consistently to be sixth (89 points). Lance Woolridge/Elvéne Vonk (NWM Ford Castrol Team) are seventh (34 points) after they scored for the first time this season at Nampo Park. The FIA T1+ points are still provisional.

The title battle for the FIA T1 Championship will also go down to the wire and the gloves will be off between the leaders, Eben Basson/Leander Pienaar (#TeamHilux Rally-Raid Toyota) and second-placed Daniel Schröder/Ryan Bland (Nissan Navara) who are separated by 44 points. Gary Bertholdt (Renergen Toyota Hilux) made use of two navigators during the season and is third (100 points) in the FIA T1 Drivers' Championship while Juan Möhr, who has been reading the notes for the past four events, is seventh (72 points) amongst the navigators.

With three class victories behind their names, Basson/Pienaar will stay focussed on winning the title, but they will no doubt keep an eye out for the winner of the fifth round, Chris Visser/Albertus Venter (Red-Lined Motorsport REVO) who missed the season opener, but two runner-up results and their recent victory after an extremely close battle with the leaders in the Free State, moved Visser to fifth place (96 points) while Venter is third in the navigators standings. Visser trails his teammate, Phillip Botha (97 points) by a single point while Botha's regular navigator, Roelof Janse van Vuren (83 points), who missed the first event of the season, is fourth.

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Also in the FIA T1+ top 10 are the Red-Lined Motorsport team-mates Johan de Bruyn/Gerhard Schutte (80 points); Thomas Bell (57 points) and his regular navigator, Wade Harris (72 points) and Nicolas Pienaar/Carl Swanepoel (Super Energi Race Fuels VK50) as well as the Blignaut brothers, Fouche and Bertus (#TeamHilux Rally Raid Toyota) who made their SARRC debut this year and Richard Leeke/Zaheer Bodhanya (Leeke Motorsport).

Teams in the FIA T1.2 championship for 2x4 vehicles missed the season opener in the Production Vehicle Category with four different winners walking away with the silverware at the following four events. It has been an up and down season for many, but consistent scoring including a victory at the fifth round, elevated the multiple Special Vehicle Champion, Lance Trethewey and Leonard Cremer (King Price Xtreme CR6) into the leading position with Trethewey on 113 points and Cremer, who scored full marks next to Brian Baragwanath at the TGRSA Desert Race 1000 on 121 points.

And while there is quite a gap between them and the rest of the competition, a small blanket of 12 points covers the three teams behind them. Ernest Roberts/Henry Köhne (JCP Steel Supplies CT6) were victorious at round three and jumped from fourth to second place (77 points) while their team-mates and the winners of the fourth round, Malcolm and Frans Kock (76 points) made a huge leap onto the podium from seventh place.

Baragwanath/Rodney Burke (Century Racing) did not compete in the recent Nampo event and dropped back from the front to fourth place with 65 and 57 points respectively. Behind them the teams are somewhat scrambled with Simon Murray (WCT Toyota Hilux Turbo) rounding off the top five of the drivers (49 points) while his navigator, Achim Bergmann (32 points) are seventh.

Four Class T victories on the trot for the young Jayden Els (18) and his navigator, Armand du Toit (King Price Xtreme Renault Duster) put them in a favourable position to claim the title, but they are not out of the woods yet as 26 points separate them from the current runners-up, Christo Rose/Arno Olivier (Neil Woolridge Motorsport Ford). Johan van Staden and his son, Sean (KEC Racing Renault) are again only two points further adrift despite missing the opening event.

Another father and son team, Hendrik and Heinrich du Plessis (Ford) competed for the first time this season at Nampo and a double helping of points see them currently in fourth place (34 points) while Bernard and his wife, Minette Johnston (Neil Woolridge Motorsport Ford) round off the top five (25 points).

Toyota still leads the Manufacturers standings (583 points) followed by Ford (133 points); Century Racing (109 points); Nissan (93 points) and Renault (30 points). Volkswagen has five points and Mercedes-Benz four.

The final two rounds of the 2022 SA Rally-Raid Championship, the Parys 400, takes place on Friday and Saturday, 11 and 12 November.

End

