



PARKER/VAN ZYL SPRING SPECIAL VEHICLE QUALIFYING SURPRISE

Glenharvie, Friday – The Sizanani Plastics Jimco pair of Brett Parker and VJ van Zyl produced one of the surprises of the season when they won the Special Vehicle qualifying race at the Atlas Copco Gold 400, the eighth and final round of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship, here today.

Without a single championship point between them this season, Parker and van Zyl eked out a 10 second victory over championship contenders Philip de Vries and Johan Viljoen in the Conqueror Porter. Third, another 23 seconds in arrears, were KwaZulu-Natal crew Clint Gibson and Gary Campbell (Dirt Sport Components Porter) who are lying second in the overall championship.

Championship leaders Evan Hutchison and Danie Stassen (Motorite BAT Viper), who need to finish third or higher to clinch the title, were down in sixth place behind KZN pair Daniel Brookes/Gavan Gray (Ducatus Property BAT) and brothers Daniel and Louw Zeelie in the Maxxis/Liqui Moly/Rockstar Porter. Hutchison and Stassen, the reigning SA champions, were a minute and nine seconds off the pace, but won't have been all that unhappy with the result.

It was not, however, a good day for former South African champions Hermann and Wichard Sullwald (Elegant Fuel Stryker), who are third in the championship, and Colin Matthews (Century Racing CR3) who went into the qualifying race with an outside chance of winning the driver's championship. The Sullwalds finished down in 12th place in the Special Vehicle category while Matthews and Rodney Burke were forced to retire with a broken side shaft – which blew Matthews out of the championship picture.

It also dealt a massive blow to any hopes Matthews had of winning the Class P championship. He went into this race trailing Swaziland driver John Thomson, in a Zarco, by 17 points and starting tomorrow's race from the back of the field is likely to be a bridge too far for the enigmatic Matthews who has twice won overall this season.

"We were only 20 kilometres into the route when it happened," said Matthews. "It is a pity because we were full of confidence before the race."

Thomson and co-driver Maurice Zermatten, who has already clinched the co-drivers title, were the quickest of the Class P brigade. They were only eight seconds ahead of Nic Goslar and Andrew Massey (SA Clinics Zarco) with Keith Makenete/Peter Hlutwa (Zarco) around three minutes further back.

On a tight and technical 60 kilometre route Parker and van Zyl took full advantage of starting further back in the field. With co-drivers under pressure cars ahead of them opened up the route, and after a couple of disappointing seasons there was happiness in the Sizanani camp.

Race headquarters, the start/finish and the designated service park are all located at the Kloof Country Club in Glenharvie, with free access to members of the public. The race starts at 08:30 tomorrow, and will be run over two loops of 170 kilometres with a compulsory 15 minute halt after the first lap.

Ends

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