



## **SPRINGBOK AJ VENTER IS NEXT UP FOR IMPERIAL AUTO CELEBRITY CHALLENGE**

Rugged utility forward AJ Venter will be the second rugby Springbok to have a taste of cross country racing in the Imperial Auto Celebrity Challenge, on the Toyota Dealer 450 in Mooi River on April 4 and 5.

The event is round two of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship with the race breaking new ground in KwaZulu-Natal. Venter follows in the footsteps of Stefan Terblanche, who made two appearances in the Celebrity Challenge, and will join Terence Marsh in the Imperial Auto Nissan Navara, running under the Regent Racing umbrella, in Class T of the Donaldson series.

Free State-born Venter played Currie Cup and Super Rugby for the Golden Lions, the Sharks and made two appearances for the Stormers late in his career. A tough and uncompromising character on the field – he was equally at home at flank, lock or 8<sup>th</sup> man - AJ also played 25 Tests for the Springboks.

AJ made his international debut against Wales, in Cardiff, in 2000 and trotted out for the last time in the green and gold against Australia at Ellis Park eight years later. He lives in Durban where he has a number of business interests.

“The characteristics that AJ showed on the rugby field are also the prerequisites you need for success in a rugged and tough sport like cross country racing,” said Marsh who has taken over driving duties in the Imperial Auto entry from Archie Rutherford. “Stefan loved every second of his two outings with Archie, and I am sure AJ is going to have as much fun.

“The Imperial Auto Celebrity Challenge has become an integral part of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship, and is playing an important role in spreading the cross country racing message to a much wider audience.”

Marsh added that with the Super Rugby season now underway the timing for Venter’s outing in Moor River was also just right.

The Toyota Dealer 450 will be based at the Weston Agricultural College on the outskirts of Mooi River on the old Greytown road. The qualifying race to determine grid start positions will start at 11:30 on Friday, April 4 and the race at 08:30 on Saturday, April 5.

Public access to race headquarters, the start/finish and designated service park is free of charge. There is also no charge for public access to spectator points along the route.

Ends

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