



The good and the bad for Sullwald family in Nkomazi 450 qualifying race

Nkomazi 450 – Round three Donaldson Cross Country Championship

Location: Malalane – Mpumalanga

Special Vehicles qualifying race results: Class A – 1 Q Sullwald/K-H Sullwald (Bat Venom); 2 E Hutchison/D Stassen (BAT Viper); 3 G du Plessis/H du Plessis (Zarco). Class P – 1 K Makenete/M Borotho (Zarco); 3 F Botha/K Visser (BAT)

Malalane, Friday – It was a case of the good and the bad today for the two Sullwald father and son crews during the 100 kilometre qualifying race for Special Vehicles at the Nkomazi 450, round three of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship.

Both Sullwald teams are former South African champions, but a win today for Quintin Sullwald and father Kallie, in the Elegant Fuel BAT, was tempered by another disaster for Herman and Wichard Sullwald, in the Elegant Fuel Stryker. For the latter a horrid run of results, stretching back to last season, continued with a broken hub putting the pair out of action within 400 metres of the start.

The other Sullwald crew, despite a few hiccups along the way, ended up with a 46 second lead over reigning champions Evan Hutchison and local boy Danie Stassen, in the Motorite BAT Venom. A puncture did nothing to aid the Hutchison/Stassen cause, and the pair ended up a scant nine seconds ahead of Gerhard du Plessis and his teenage son, Hardus, in a Jimco, who won the Toyota Dealer 450 last time out.

The du Plessis pair currently lead the overall and premier Class A championships. Non finishes have hurt the other teams this season, and reliability will be a major factor in tomorrow's race.

“The route was good and very challenging, and the race is going to be a tough one,” said Stassen. “The puncture hurt us but we are in a good position.”

If it was a day of mixed fortunes for the Sullwalds, the opposite was the case for the du Plessis family. Du Plessis's brother Laurence, teamed up with Gielie le Roux in a Zarco of more recent vintage than the Jimco, were fourth with only 15 seconds separating the siblings.

In their best performance of the season so far Brett Parker and VZ van Zyl (Sizanani Jimco) came home in a solid fifth place. With less than two minutes separating the first five cars there should be some hectic racing in the early stages.

There was something of a turn up for the books with Keith Makenete and Moalosi Borotho (Zarco) coming home sixth ahead to win Class P ahead of reigning champions John Thomson and Maurice Zermatten, in another Zarco. Thomson and Zermatten lead this year's championship but will start nearly 90 seconds behind Makenete and Borotho in a duel that will be closely watched as the race unfolds.

The two Class P cars came in ahead of Lance Trethewey and Geoff Minnitt in the recently acquired LTE/Mortimers Toyota Bat Venom. The car was previously campaigned by Hutchison/Stassen with Trethewey and Minnitt gradually finding their feet.

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Third in Class P and also in the top 10 were the steady Frikkie Botha and Koos Visser in a BAT. They were comfortably ahead of Capetonian Derick du Toit and Clive Gray in the CRC BAT.

The other big losers on the day were Colin Matthews and Rodney Burke, in the Century Racing CR3, who were among the Class P pre-race favourites. Matthews, who won this race overall last season, and Burke lost wads of time stuck in a ditch and will start more than 40 minutes behind Makenete and Borotheo.

Tomorrow's race starts at 8:30 with race headquarters, the start/finish and designated service point all located at the Riverview Preparatory School. Public access to these areas and spectator points along the route is free of charge.

Competitors will compete two laps of the route with a compulsory 15 minute halt at the end of the first loop.

Ends

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