

TOYOTA 1000 DESERT RACE

2014



JWANENG
BOTSWANA

27—29 June

SPECIAL VEHICLE CATEGORY IS POISED FOR DRAMA ON TOYOTA KALAHARI BOTSWANA 1000 DESERT RACE

Jwaneng, Botswana – High drama unfolded in the Special Vehicle category on day two of the Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1 000 Desert Race here today, with more drama set to unfold over the final 450 kilometres tomorrow in what is round four of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship.

There was a major shock when championship leaders Gerhard du Plessis and his teenage son Hardus, in a Jimco, were excluded from the results. After lying third at the halfway stage of today's racing section the pair were excluded for a technical infringement.

At the end of the day, however, the du Plessis family were still in the driving seat. Gerhard's brother Laurence and Gielie le Roux (Zarco) held a 31 second lead over former South African champions Quintin and Kallie Sullwald in the Elegant Fuel BAT. The Sullwalds, in turn, were a minute and 58 seconds ahead of reigning South African champions Evan Hutchison and Danie Stassen, in the Motorite BAT.

But with less than three minutes between the top three crews, the race was poised for more twists and turns. The Toyota 1000 Desert Race invariably produces a sting in the tail, and tomorrow could be no exception.

Du Plessis/le Roux, in only his second race, the Sullwalds and Hutchison/Stassen sniped away at each other – with the other du Plessis crew also involved – on the first of the two 225 kilometre loops that made up the race. It was fascinating stuff and, with double points on offer on the only marathon event on the calendar, there were high stakes.

"The route is very fast and you cannot afford a mistake," said Hutchison. "It was a terrific day with some really good racing.

"Tomorrow is going to be another tough day."

Republic of Congo brothers Eduardo and Riccardo Argazzi (BAT) slotted into fourth place. Their only problem through the day was a rope that got tangled up in the rear axle, but ultimately it was not too costly.

The Argazzis, however, ended the day under threat from former SA champions Wichard and Hermann Sullwald (Elegant Fuel Stryker) who were just 30 seconds behind the Congo pair. For Wichard Sullwald, after years of co-driving for his father, it is his first full race as a driver.

Next up, on their Toyota 1000 Desert Race debut, were KwaZulu-Natal crew Arthur Barnes and Anthony Usher in a BAT. The pair are in their first full season of national racing and steady results see them currently sixth in the championship.

"This is our first Desert Race, and we are determined at finish," said Barnes. "We are more than happy with our current position."



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Barnes and Usher were closely followed by two other KZN crews who completed the top eight and headed up Class P where there is potential for more drama. James Watson and John Thompson, in a BAT, held a tenuous 14 second lead over reigning champions John Thomson and Maurice Zermatten in a Zarco.

The final racing section starts at Jwaneng at 08:00 tomorrow with some highly experienced crews set for a battle that could provide a more than dramatic finish.

Ends

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