



MATTHEWS/BURKE ON TOP IN SPECIAL VEHICLE QUALIFYING AT FORCE FUEL 450

Sun City, Friday – Century Racing crew Colin Matthews and Rodney Burke took up where they left off last year when they won the Special Vehicle qualifying race at the Force Fuel 450, round five of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship, here today.

Matthews and Burke, in the Century Racing CR3 running in Class P, won last year's race and today showed a clean pair of heels to the Class A opposition. The pair were 57 seconds clear of overall and Class A championship leaders Quintin and Kallie Sullwald, in the Elegant Fuel BAT Venom.

The final podium place went to Laurence du Plessis and Gielie le Roux, in a Zarco, ahead of Wichard Sullwald and Byron Sykes in the Elegant Fuel Porter Stryker. Following the sudden retirement of his father Hermann after the Toyota 1000 Desert Race, the younger Sullwald was accompanied by brother-in-law Byron Sykes who was out in a cross-country car for the first time.

Understandably Matthews and Burke were delighted with the result and reported no problems. It was their best qualifying result of the season, and gives them a clear road ahead tomorrow on what is going to be a dusty route.

"It was our first clean run in a qualifying race this season," said Matthews. "The car was great, and hopefully we can repeat last year's result."

The news from the Sullwald camp was not as bright. The Elegant Fuel BAT picked up a worrying "noise" which the team was investigating.

"We have no idea what it was," Sullwald senior said, "but we'll track it down. We weren't operating to our full potential."

A good run saw Brett Parker and VZ van Zyl take fifth place in the Sizanani Plastics Porter with the pair coming in ahead of the Argazzi brothers, Eduardo and Riccardo (BAT), who are based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Behind them the top eight was completed by Kwa-Zulu-Natal crew Daniel Brookes/Gavan Gray (Ducatis Property BAT), and Jimmy Zahos and Zaheer Bodhanya in the Cobalt Racing Stryker which made its debut at the same race last year.

It was another eventful outing for reigning champions Evan Hutchison and Danie Stassen (Motorite BAT), who crept into the top 10 ahead of Class P championship leaders John Thomson and Maurice Zermatten in a Zarco. The throttle on the Motorite car stuck wide open soon after the start with the pair constantly overshooting corners.

Thomson and Zermatten were just over seven minutes behind Class P leaders Matthews and Burke. A midfield start position will make life difficult for the pair in a pace versus reliability clash.

The father/daughter combination of Coetzee and Sandra Labuscagne (Chemsystems Zarco) came up with a good result to take third in Class P. They were followed home by joint championship leaders James Watson/John Thompson (BAT), and Jeremy Wood/Ashley Thorn (K9 Racing Aceco) who battled along minus odometer and GPS navigation.

Tomorrow's race starts at 8:00 am with race headquarters, the ceremonial start and the designated service park all located at the Sun City complex. Public entry into these areas and spectator points along the route is free of charge.

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