



EXPERIENCE AND YOUTH TRIUMPH IN SPECIAL VEHICLE CATEGORY **Du Plessis and le Roux win Force Fuel 450 at Sun City**

Sun City, Saturday – Experience and youth combined to score a comfortable Special Vehicle victory on the Force Fuel 450, round five of the Donaldson Cross Country Championship, which finished here today.

The experience came via veteran Lawrence du Plessis and the youth in the form of Gielie le Roux, in only his third ever race, who romped to a convincing win in a Zarco. The pair had around six minutes in hand over former South African champions Quintin and Kallie Sullwald, in the Elegant Fuel BAT Venom.

The final podium place and Class P honours went to last year's overall winners, Colin Matthews and Rodney Burke, in the Century Racing CR3. The Century Racing pair won the qualifying race, but a puncture midway through the first of the two loops that made up the race through the Pilanesberg dropped them down the field.

“We never had to get out the car,” said du Plessis. “The gearbox was overheating towards the end of the race, but it was a good route and we enjoyed ourselves.”

It was a good day for the le Roux family. Gielie is the son of former South African champion Joks le Roux who won Class S in the Production Vehicle category.

For the Sullwalds it was an adventurous outing. They had an early coming together with Production Vehicle crew Anthony Taylor and Dennis Murphy, and then lost third gear midway through the first lap.

Lap two saw them pick up an alternator problem. With a five minute cushion they did not come under attack from Matthews and Burke, and had enough in hand to stretch their lead at the top of the Special Vehicle championship.

“We had a few moments on a tough outing,” said Quintin, “but from a championship point of view it was a good result for us.”

Early scoring saw Republic of Congo brothers Eduardo and Riccardo Argazzi (BAT) placed fourth overall. They were then hit with a hefty penalty for straying from the route and that dropped them to ninth.

The Argazzi's error lifted Brett Parker and veteran VZ van Zyl, in the Sizanani Plastics Porter, into fourth place. It was their best result of the season, and they were followed home by reigning South African champions Evan Hutchison and Danie Stassen (Motorite BAT Viper), who ended a string of disappointing results with a solid fifth place.

There was also another solid performance from KwaZulu-Natal crew Daniel Brookes and Gavan Gray in the Ducatis Property BAT. Behind them Wichard Sullwald and co-driver Byron Sykes were delighted with seventh place in the Elegant Fuel Porter Stryker.

Sullwald recently took over driving duties from father Hermann who announced his retirement from racing after the Toyota 1000 Desert Race. Sykes is the younger Sullwald's brother in law and was making his cross country debut.

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In Class P pace overcame reliability with Matthews and Burke around 20 minutes clear of reigning champions John Thomson and Maurice Zermatten, in a Zarco, who completed the top eight. Third in class were John Telford and Victor Ntseke in the Calcamite/Rhino Tanks BAT.

A disappointing result for KZN pair James Watson and John Thompson (BAT), who were sixth, saw Thomson and Zermatten draw clear in the Class P title race. The two crews went into the weekend level pegging at the top of the championship standings.

The next round of the Donaldson championship is the Vryburg 450 in North West with cross country racing returning to its roots.

Ends

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