

## **FURIOUS SA ENDURANCE FIGHT IN PROSPECT AT GQEBERHA**

**Preview: SAES Winter Motorsport Festival**

**SA Endurance National Championship – Rd 3**

**SA GT National Championship – Rd 5 and 6**

**Aldo Scribante Raceway, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)**

**4 – 5 August 2023**

The SA Endurance National Championship is set to light up the Aldo Scribante racetrack in Gqeberha when 30 competitors are unleashed at 16h30 for their four-hour race powering well into the night, where dancing lights, glowing brakes and flaming exhausts are the name of the game.

With just five points separating the leading contenders, the SAES Winter Motorsport Festival is sure to see sparks fly as the championship reaches the mid-point of the season

Charl Arangies heads the title chase with 93 points and teams up with Mercedes-AMG Advanced Driving instructor Clint Weston in their Pagid/Stradale Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3. Arangies has one victory and a second place to his credit while their main championship rivals, the experienced crew of Hein and Henk Lategan and Verissimo Tavares, will be ready to pounce on any opportunity in their Black Bull Racing Porsche 911 GT3 Cup, aiming to add to their win last time out at Red Star Raceway.

Three entries that may upset the German pecking order is the new Adjust4Sleep/Rico Barlow Racing Nova Proto NP02 of Nick Adcock, Jonathan Thomas and Dawie Joubert. Powered by a 5-litre Ford V8 and weighing about the same as a toaster at just 765kg, the lightweight European racer will come up against the rapid 6.2 litre Chev-engined Ginetta G57 of Craig Jarvis and saloon racing hotshot Andrew Rackstraw.

Xolile Letlaka and Stuart White will be out in their Into Africa Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo with the intent to get their campaign back on track. Mo Mia and Lee Thompson take up the fight in their Toys-R-Us Porsche 911 GT3 Cup, looking to at least match their opening round fourth place finish.

Another rival to the prototype cars will come from the Harp Motorsport Pilbeam-Nissan MP84 LMP2 piloted by Francis Carruthers and Sandro Biccari

While these high-end endurance cars are likely to slug it out at the front of the field they are not in championship contention, leaving the Porsche and Mercedes teams aiming to finish ahead of each other to gain the upper hand, albeit it in the lower overall race positions.

Fourth overall and leading the class D fight is Daniel Rowe. He will be joined by Graeme Nathan in their Volkswagen Motorsport Polo GTi SupaCup, which is said to have a few new developments under the familiar blue bodywork. The VW runs like clockwork, so another top result is on the cards.

Capable of taking the fight to the factory VW entry is the Kalex VW Polo SupaCup of Karah Hill and Jurie Swart; the two Polo teams had a massive battle last time they were on track together.

Four points behind Rowe lurks the rapid Dolphin Racing Juno-Nissan SS3 of Capetonians Byron Mitchell and Peter van der Spuy, who lie second in the class A title chase and looking for a maiden podium.

Another car boasting immense V8 power and a lightweight chassis is the Class B Backdraft Roadster of Mike McLaughlin/Steve Clark aiming to repeat their podium finish at the previous event.

An interesting entry is that of Mozambique-based Korridas Racing driven by Marcos Rodrigues and Bruno Campos in a highly modified Audi RS4.

The Class E championship-within-a-championship is almost impossible to predict as it sees a fleet of identical Lexus-powered Backdraft roadsters taking on the lone Xena Chemicals Nash-VW of Andrew Horne/Gerald Buys, who took the silverware home at the last time of asking.

Crisjan and Ben Morgenrood lead the class title chase in their Ben Morgenrood Group Backdraft, but it's tight at the top. One point away is CJ Blackman/Jean-Paul Briner in their Tradecor Steel machine, the rookies also leading the Index of Performance Championship.

Defending class and Index champions Harm and Barend Pretorius are going to the coast looking for another win to add to their victory at the first round back in March. They will have their hands full with the PPLE/Adapt entry of Phillip Meyer, Mark Harvey and Dean Wolson who were runners-up last time out.

Fikile Holomisa/ Bapi Rubuluza are aiming to turn their season around; the Team Qhubani Backdraft had a stellar season last year but this season have failed to score so far. Brian Martin, the man behind the Backdraft racers teams up with Trevor Graham will be looking to bag a big haul of points after their non-finish at the last round.

Tony Martin, winner of the 1984 Daytona 24-Hour race teams up with Gavin Rooke in another factory-supported Backdraft.

## **THE ONE-HOUR DASH**

A separate championship for teams running the first hour of the Endurance race has been a walkover for hometown hero Michael Stephen who tops the leader board by eight points thanks to back-to-back victories in the opening two rounds.

The Ultimate Outlaws Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2-mounted driver is certain to start as the favourite at home, but former V8 racer Roelf du Plessis has adapted well to his Ultimate Outlaws McLaren MP4-12C and will give the Audi a run for its money.

Izak Spies will be looking to trouble the scorers with a strong showing and get points on the board in a second Ultimate Outlaws McLaren MP4-12C. He will come under pressure from Paul Hill's Kalex

Aston Martin Vantage V12, who in turn will have to fend off Marius Jackson's MJR Motorsport Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo2.

The Bigfoot Express Team is back to full strength and ready to pack a punch as the pair of rumbling V8 Mercedes-AMG GT3s mix it with the wailing V10 and V12 machinery.

Andrew Culbert is enjoying a successful season while team owner Sun Moodley returns after a brief hiatus. The Mercs are super quick around the Aldo Scribante track and will be watched with interest.

An interesting entry comes from Volkswagen Motorsport, who has recruited Reghard Roets to drive a development Polo SupaCup, while an additional Polo SupaCup Polo will see the current VW Polo Cup championship leader Charl Visser make his debut in the class in another, pointing in a direction the youngster's future motorsport path is likely to take.

Silvio Scribante (Cemza cement Lamborghini Huracan GT3) and brother Aldo (Scribante Concrete Lamborghini Huracan GT3) are also gunning for 1-Hour Dash honours and being a home track, will be in the thick of the action at the sharp end of the grid.

## **SA GT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP**

### **CAN SILVIO SCRIBANTE STOP THE STEPHEN STEAMROLLER AT HOME?**

There is no hometown advantage at the sharp end of the SAGT Championship grid; both Michael Stephen and Silvio and Aldo Scribante hail from Gqeberha and enjoy support from their fan base. This evens up the playing field for rounds five and six of the premier national Championship and sets the scene for a scintillating battle for top honours.

It will be a no-holds-barred battle as the defending SAGT Champion Silvio Scribante makes up ground after two non-finishes in rounds one and three. The usually ultra-reliable Cemza Cement Lamborghini from Scuderia Scribante has a single victory from four races, while Stephen's Ultimate Outlaws Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo 2 can boast of three wins, leaving the Audi pilot with a healthy points gap.

Lightning fast, Stuart White will be hoping for a change in fortune aboard his Into Africa Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo after three non-finishes due to mechanical issues. The crack team has worked hard on the car and given a clean run, will be in the hunt for trophies.

Second in the standings and aiming for a big result is Aldo Scribante in his Scribante Concrete Lamborghini Huracan GT3 who is second in the standings, 15 points down on the Audi and only three ahead of the Pro-Am class leader Andrew Culbert who has enjoyed a strong season aboard his Bigfoot Express Mercedes-AMG GT3.

Culbert will have his teammate to deal with as Sun Moodley returns in his Bigfoot Express Merc which should set the cat amongst the pigeons in the Pro-Am class. The Affalterbach pair will have to deal with the pair of Ultimate Outlaws McLaren MP4-12Cs driven by the very quick Roelf du

Plessis and Izak Spies, who will be adding points to the SAGT Teams Championship with Ultimate Outlaws leads by 38 points.

Paul Hill is making an appearance in his Aston Martin Vantage GT3 and should give the British supercars something to think about.

## **SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

The Winter Motorsport Festival offers a full day's racing with races for the EP Regional Saloons, WPMC GTi Challenge, Coastal Challenge saloons and two motorbike races as well as Sports & GT which will race with the SAGT cars.

## **WHEN AND HOW MUCH?**

Tickets are available at the gate only and cost R80 for adults while children under the age of 12 get in free.

Track action starts with a warm-up session for the SA Endurance and SAGT competitors at 08:15, followed by qualifying for all the support classes with SAE and SAGT qualifying taking place at 09:35

The first one-hour SAGT Race, combined with the Sports & GT field takes place at 12:15. The second race is combined with the SA Endurance race for the first hour, ie: 16h30 to 17:30

The SA Endurance 4-Hour race starts at 16h30 with a scheduled finish at 20:30.

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