

Additional challenges for Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1000 Desert Race

Two events in the South African Cross Country Series (SACCS), the Lichtenburg 400 in North West Province and the Battlefields 400 in KwaZulu-Natal for the auto and moto championships, have already taken place with preparations in full swing for the next challenge, the Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1000 Desert Race, based in Jwaneng, from 23-25 June 2017.

With 80% of this year's route virgin territory, competitors on the Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1000 Desert Race will face additional challenges.

A busy weekend of motor racing is rounded out by two rounds of the Botswana Motorsport championship on 24 and 25 June 2017.



Giniel de Villiers and Dennis Murphy. Image: Nadia Jordaan

The race also includes a round of the prestigious Dakar Challenge, run in conjunction with several global cross-country races. The winner of each round of the challenge is invited to take part in Dakar 2018, with their entry fees waived as the reward.

Dakar challenge

This year's Dakar Challenge consists of five rounds, with three dedicated to motorcycles, and two catering for cars. Toyota's sponsorship of the Dakar Challenge, as part of the Desert Race, opens the door for privateer competitors to compete in the Dakar Rally at a reduced cost.

The race is again based in Jwaneng, home of the world's largest diamond mine operated by Debswana, and is the only marathon event on the SACCS calendar. The area has had recent good rains and the twisty and sandy track winds its way through the long grass and dense shrub.

“In other words what we have are typical desert race conditions,” said route director Adri Roets. “With tremendous cooperation from the various land boards in the area, we managed to identify a route that is drastically altered from last year. The only constants are the challenges competitors will face and the race is famous for providing a sting in the tail.”



Leeroy Poulter and Rob Howie. Image: Nadia Jordaan

The course is made up of south and east loops of approximately 210 kilometres which will each be repeated twice. Auto championship crews will complete a 70-kilometre qualifying race to determine grid positions, and moto competitors a 45-kilometre time trial on Friday, 23 June 2017.

“As with previous years the route is spectator friendly and there are numerous vantage points where enthusiasts can follow their favourites,” said Roets.

The Botswana Police Service will again mount a massive campaign to control traffic and crowds that flock to vantage points and the overnight camping areas.

“Once again we cannot fault the cooperation we have had from the Botswana Police Service, the Botswana Tourist Organisation (BTO), the Jwaneng Town Council, Debswana and the Botswana Motorsport authority,” said SACCS chief executive officer Archie Rutherford. “Without the enthusiastic help these organisations provide, it would be impossible to organise what is a weekend of world-class motorsport.”

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