**MICHAEL TOPS MAD ZWARTKOPS TOURING CARS**

*Van Rooyen, Wolk, share honours in a dramatic day of racing!*

Michael van Rooyen may have taken overall honours with a second place and a win on the day, but that did not prevent opening race winner Robert Wolk from consolidating his position at the top of the South African Touring Cars title points table at another dramatic outing at Zwartkops on Saturday.

Championship leader Robert Wolk made short work of qualifying to put his Chemical Logistics WCT BMW 128ti TC on pole position, two tenths clear of closely stacked home team Toyota Gazoo Racing Corolla hatchback trio, Nathi Msimanga Saood Variawa and van Rooyen. Julian van der Watt’s Investchem WTC Volkswagen Golf GTI TC, rookie privateer Anthony Pretorius’ OMP LTR Toyota Corolla TC sedan and Andy Schofield’s FlySafair Chemical Logistics BMW 128ti TC closed off the SATC grid.

Behind them, Keegan Campos put his Campos SupaPolo on SATC SupaCup pole position by two-tenths over Jonathan Mogotsi’s Volkswagen Motorsport car, Bradley Liebenberg’s Gazoo Toyota SupaStarlet and Charl Visser’s second VW Motorsport Polo. Tate Bishop’s Angri LTR machine lined up sixth alongside Graphix Supply World lad David Franco’s SupaPolo, Dean Venter’s VDN Auto M-Town car and Jean-Pierre van der Walt’s Platinum Wheels entry. Nicolas Vostanis, Jason Campos Turn 1 car, Kalex Lass Karah Hill and Masters entry Roberto Franco’s Graphix Supply car closed off the grid.

Msimanga jumped Wolk off the line but the safety car was soon despatched to clear Robbie Franco’s stranded SupaPolo. Msimanga was unflustered at the restart as he led Wolk, Variawa, van der Watt, Pretorius and Schofield. It was a similar situation in SupaCup where Mogotsi jumped Campos into T1 before the safety car intervened. Mogotsi took charge after that to lead the SupaCup way from Campos, Liebenberg, a quick starting Bishop, Visser and David Franco.

Variawa’s tough season then went from bad to worse as his Corolla ground to a halt. With his closest outside title rival out, Wolk then simply followed a delighted Msimanga home to extend his championship advantage. Van Rooyen ended a distant third from van der Watt and Pretorius in close pursuit, and Schofield behind them. Msimanga’s glory was short lived, however. He was docked 30 seconds for a jump start to drop to sixth as he handed Wolk the win. Nathi however inherited the reverse grid race 2 pole.

Mogotsi duly brought it home to an easy SupaCup win from Campos and Liebenberg not very far behind. Visser fought back to fourth after pressuring Bishop into a mistake from Jason Campos, JP van der Walt, Hill, Venter and Vostanis.

The second race was dramatic from the get-go. Michael van Rooyen muscled his way into the lead, but his teammates Msimanga and Variawa made contact up the hill to see both drop back and Variawa well down. Wolk made a great start and quickly found his way into second, only to clash with Pretorius, who was eliminated in the process. Wolk rejoined well down as van Rooyen led van der Watt, Msimanga and Schofield. Msimanga’s bonnet damaged by contact with Variawa, then flew open to put him out.

All of which left Michael van Rooyen to cruise to an easy win from van der Watt and Schofield on his first Touring Car podium. Robert Wolk recovered to fourth to minimise the title damage inflicted on him, while Variawa made it back to fifth among the SupaCup frontrunners. Of them, Keegan Campos led from lights to flag from Mogotsi and Liebenberg, who jumped Visser as they were re-passed by Wolk, to give the new Starlet a welcome podium third. Tate Bishop came home fifth from Jason Campos, David Franco, Hill, Vostanis and Masters duo van der Walt and Roberto Franco.

With the paperwork flying in the stewards’ room, these results are likely to change as protests and hearings wrangle on. Although that is unlikely to affect the overall top three who kept pit of trouble as Michael van Rooyen took the day from Julian van der Watt and Andy Schofield. South African Touring Cars visits Aldo Scribante in Gqeberha next on Saturday 29 June to give Nelson Mandela Bay race fans something special to look forward to. Diarise it now if you live anywhere close!