**HOT RACING WARMS DUNLOP WINTER FESTIVAL**

*Thrills from dawn to dusk as Gauteng racers impress*

Zwartkops’ Dunlop Winter Festival may have raced in the fresh conditions expected of the Highveld at this time of the year but track action from the top drawer across the board and a festival atmosphere at the Pretoria circuit made for some great entertainment. The warmth spread far further too, as racers and fans also generously donated charity blankets to warm those for whom it matters most.

On track, Julian Fameliaris made no mistake as he sped to the opening Mobil 1 V8 Supercars win in his Corvette from Thomas Reib’s Lumina. Warren Lombard in a Mustang, Franco di Matteo Jaguar XKR, Terry Wilford’s Mustang and GT2 winner Shaun Holtzhausen followed in his Lumina from Auke Compaan’s Mustang and Steve Herbst’s Corvette. Wilford then led Inverted grid race 2 until he stopped to leave a delighted Warren Lombard to lead Franco di Matteo home to take the day. Reib kept Fameliaris behind for third as Marx took GT2 from class day winner Holtzhausen and Compaan.

Wayne Masters overcame a fast starting Luigi Ferro to win the opening PABAR VW heat before Bevin Masters recovered from a poor getaway to beat Ferro to second. Behind them, Stuart Mack survived to win bumper car Class B from Shiren Rajpaul and Jacques Hayes, while young Chris Tait took C from Andy Gossman and Kyle Petersen. Wayne then beat Bevin Masters and Luigi Ferro in a thrilling race 2, as Mack did the B double over Ethan Coetzee and Hayes, and Gossman took revenge on Tate and Petersen in C.

Ryan Naicker upset the BMW M Performance Parts Series applecart by taking the opening race win from Class A rivals Leon Loubser and Fabio Fedetto. Renier Smith beat Nek Makris and Oz Biagioni in Class B, while Devin Robertson took Class C from Jan Eversteyn. Racing on their own, George Economides took Class D from Cobus Bohmer, while Johan Miller won in E from Michael Grobler. Naicker then rubbed it in with the second race win, Makris turned the B tables on Smith. Robertson and Economides did the C and D double, and Matthew Wadeley beat Miller in E.

Peter Hills finally put an end to Lendl Jansen’s unbeaten 2024 DOE Formula Vee powered by CIM Lubri Fuel run by beating him to the opening heat win. Shaun van de Linde watched it all go down ahead of Brandon Hills, Richard Carr and Johan Gouws. Brandon Hills then came from behind to pip dad Peter to the post with Jansen only third in the second race. Van de Linde followed from Theodore Vermaak, Kyle Watt and Marcel Blignaut.

George Economides was in imperious form as he stormed to Ferro Energia 111 Sports & Saloons victory in his turbo Golf with Lenard Archer’s BMW Phillip Meyer and his Porsche 924 GTR, Mark du Toit’s BMW Z4 and Dawie Olivier’s BMW in chase. Melanie Spurr took class A in her Golf, Wayne Lebotschy’s Golf won Class B from Luigi Ferro Polo, Ian Ehlers’ Golf took Class X and Wouter Roos’ Polo Class C as Seten Naidoo and his new Corsa beat Kiresen Reddy’s Civic in SuperHatch.

Economides repeated his dominant form in race 2 from du Toit, Troy Marais’ Toyota 86, Olivier and Phillip Meyer. Spurr took class A, Ian Ehlers’ Golf B, Luigi Ferro’s Polo X and Roos C. There was also a SuperHatch Invitational where Francois Henning’s Polo beat Reddy’s Civic, Francis Aldrich and Keegan Nathan’s Polos and Rob Clark’s Ballade.

The Dunlop Winter Festival also proved a hit with the crowd that braved the winter chill to enjoy a sizzling day’s racing backed by hot laps and skid pan sessions and much more. The Regional Festival now takes a short break before returning for its away weekend at Killarney in Cape Town on Saturday 10 August.