**SA CROSS COUNTRY: IT COMES DOWN TO THIS**

*National Cross Country Moto Finale descends on Bloemfontein*

The 2023 Trademore South African Cross Country Championship comes down to an epic finale Be Human at Middelwater near Bloemfontein on Saturday 9 September. The exciting new event on spectacular Free State terrain will crown most of 2023’s champions as Davin Cocker’s OR2 Husqvarna, OR1 men Bradley Cox’s KTM and Michael Pentecost on a Honda, and newly crowned Senior champion Kerim Fitz-Gerald’s KTM arrive in mathematical contention for the hallowed overall crown. And KTM, Honda and Husqvarna will fight over the all-important Manufacturer’s championship.

Looking at the classes, overall leader and Husqvarna factory rider Davin Cocker has already wrapped up the 350 cc OR2 title, but the race is very much on for second between KTM four Kyle Eggar, brother and sister Scott and Leah Heygate and Juan Niebuhr, and Teak Harrower’s GasGas. It’s certainly not fait au compete in open class OR1, where Brother Leader Tread KTM lad Bradley Cox has Michael Pentecost and his Franchise Co Tork Craft Honda hot on his heels. Behind them come Honda duo Ian Rall and Hayden Louw, and Charles Reinhard-Kersop on his KTM.

The big fight is in 250cc OR3, where the title lead has changed hands throughout the season and four riders remain in contention. Honda lad Kyle Eggar holds a scant eight point advantage over Matthew Wilson’s Brother Leader Tread KTM with Haydn Cole’s Franchise Co Tork Craft Honda another four points adrift and Ryan Pelser’s factory Husqvarna ready to pick up the pieces. Also watch for Tyron Beverley and Noah Maartens’ Hondas, Myles Crookes’ KTM, Cobus Bester’s Husqvarna and Wian Wentzel’s Kawasaki among the 250s.

Kerim Fitz-Gerald has already wrapped this season’s Seniors title up on his Red Bull KTM, leaving comeback king Louwrens Mahoney and Wynand Delport’s Franchise Co Tork Craft Hondas and Marco Cocci’s Yamaha to fight for the places. Pepson Plastics Kawasaki man Pieter Holl has likewise already claimed the Masters title, where Husqvarna rider Wayne Farmer, Mielies Le Roux on a KTM, and Kobus Jonck’s Honda will fight over second.

Luke Walker leads title rivals Thomas Scales and Blake Young’s similar KTM in the 125 cc High School chase with Derek Karam on a Yamaha, and another KTM trio Brandon Clarke, Rory Donaldson, and Nathan Westerdale Daniel Peckham in chase. Murray Smith is already 85 Junior champion on his Franchise Co Tork Craft Husqvarna, with KTM lads Bruno Niebuhr, Franco Fourie and Drikus van der Merwe scrapping for second. GJ Coetzee’s Husqvarna is also home and dry in the 65 cc chase, with Wilco du Plooy, John Luke van der Westhuizen, Cambeul du Preez and Joshua Fotheringham struggling over second.

KTM arrives at Bloemfontein in the 2023 Trademore South African Cross Country Manufacturers Championship lead from Honda, Husqvarna, and Kawasaki. Cross Country officials are excited about the terrain and organization of the Bloemfontein finale and expect a thrilling result over the weekend.