**JJ & TOMMY STORM TO SA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**

*Potgieter & du Toit dominate Bronkhorstspruit, take title*

JJ Potgieter and Tommy du Toit drove their Hyundai to a double victory on the past weekend’s Bronkhorstspruit double header powered by MRF Rally Tyres, to wrap up the 2023 South African Rally Driver’s and Navigators’ Rally Championship. The young chargers now join an illustrious group of drivers and navigators as South African Rally Champions in what appears to be just the start of an exciting new era for the local sport.

**Round 7 Friday: JJ & Tommy Wrap it Up**

Potgieter and du Toit started strong winning both the 16 km opening stage from Chris Coertse, now with Henry Kohne in his NRC 1 Mazda2 hot seat, and Mandla Mdakane and Kes Naidoo’s Gazoo Toyota Starlet, and the 12km second stage from NRC 1 Subaru Impreza crews, Johan Strauss and Caro Storm, and Paul Van Niekerk and Willemjan Human. Magriet Potgieter and Rikus Fourie’s NRC 2 Ford Fiesta then scored a surprise stage 3 win from Potgieter and du Toit, who consolidated their overall lead over Coertse and Kohne.

The 12 km fourth stage however saw both Magriet Potgieter and Fourie, and Jono van Wyk and Nico Swartz NRC 1 Gazoo Toyota Starlet exit, as Coertse and Kohne led Potgieter and du Toit and Strauss and Storm home. Potgieter and du Toit then restored the status quo to defeat Coertse and Kohne and Mdakane and Naidoo in all three of the final 8-odd km stages. Their sixth rally win in seven starts was enough to wrap up the 2023 South African Rally championship.

They beat Coertse and Kohne by nine seconds, with Strauss and Storm third from Mdakane and Naidoo, van Niekerk and Human, and NRC2 winners Benjamin Habig and Barry White’s Volkswagen Polo in sixth. Bruce Swatton and Craig Reyneke’s NRC 1 Auris, Jonathan Simms and Adam Tyrer’s NRC 1 Tazz, Roelof Coertse and Les Mackenzie classic Ford Escort and Russel Stone and Jonty Brown’s RunX closed off the top ten.

**Saturday Round 9: Potgieter & du Toit Rub It In**

Saturday’s Bronx Rally Round 8 started as a completely new event powered by MRF Rally Tyres. JJ Potgieter and Tommy du Toit and their Hyundai picked up there they left off to win the opening two stages. They beat a sprightly Jono van Wyk and Nico Swartz’ Toyota Starlet and Chris Coertse and Henry Kohne’s Mazda2 to the 12 km opening stage win, and Coertse and Kohne, and Johan Strauss and Caro Storm’s Subaru on the 17 km second stage.

Coertse and Kohne bounced back to beat Potgieter and du Toit and Paul van Niekerk and Willejan Human’s Subaru in 11 km stage 4, but Potgieter and du Toit were back in charge ahead of Coertse and Kohne and Mandla Mdakane and Kes Naidoo’s Starlet in 12 km stage 4. Coertse and Kohne got two back over Potgieter and du Toit and Strauss and Storm in 17 km Stage 5, and from Potgieter and du Toit and van Niekerk and Human in the final 13 km test.

That was however not enough to prevent Potgieter and du Toit making it seven wins from eight starts by 14 seconds over Coertse and Kohne, with van Niekerk and Human third. Strauss and Storm made it a Subaru 3-4, from Mdakane and Naidoo, with Gerald Klopper and Johan Aucamp sixth in an NRC 1 Toyota Auris.

Jonathan Simms and Adam Tyrer’s Tazz followed from NRC 2 top two, Gustav Potgieter and Carolyn Swan’s Ford Fiesta, and George Smalberger and Robbie Coetzee’s Volkswagen Polo, and Russel Stone and Jonty Brown in a NRC 4 Toyota RunX. Notable retirements included Jono van Wyk and Nico Swartz’ brittle Toyota Starlet and Benjamin Habig and Barry White’s NRC 2 Volkswagen Polo, both with engine failure, and Magriet Potgieter and Rikus Fourie’s overheating NRC 2 Ford Fiesta.

All of which leaves JJ Potgieter and Tommy du Toit in an unassailable championship lead in their Hyundai with two rounds still left to rally in Dullstroom on 17 and 18 November. JJ and Tommy only stepped up to top class NRC 1 late last season and immediately stamped authority on the South African rally scene, arriving in 2023 on the front foot and dominating from the get-go. This South African Rally report is powered by MRF Rally Tyres.