**DUNLOP SALUTES NATIONAL HEROES**

*Dunlop Tyres dominated SA circuit racing again in 2023*

2023 may have been a dramatic year of Extreme Festival South African National Championship racing, but Dunlop Tyres was on top of it throughout. South Africa’s circuit racing tyre of choice starred throughout a fraught season of SupaCup, CompCare Polo Cup, Global Touring Cars, and Gazoo Toyota League Racing. This is how it happened.

Hype Energy racer Bradley Liebenberg may have ultimately fought VW Motorsport driver Jonathan Mogotsi off for the SupaCup title, but it was Keegan Campos who came out of the blocks with all guns blazing. Keegan did the double at the Kyalami season opener, as Bradley suffered a weekend to forget. But Liebenberg was right back on it to win four races in a row through Killarney and Zwartkops, before Keegan bounced back with a Port Elizabeth double.

Liebenberg and Mogotsi then shared out the wins at both East London and back at Killarney, which Campos missed to get married. That left Bradley and Jonathan to fight it out for the title, which Bradley clinched with a double win at Zwartkops. Behind them, Campos took third despite missing the final two races from late starter Arnold Neveling. He overcame Cape duo, rookie Tate Bishop and Masters champion Danie van Niekerk for fourth.

2023 champion Charl Visser’s Team Red VW and Nathans driver Dawie van der Merwe shared the opening round CompCare Polo Cup wins before comeback kid Giordano Lupini’s Tork Craft Polo arrived unannounced at Killarney’s second round and proceeded to dominate. Lupini, Visser and Bucketlist Racing rookie Anthony Pretorius then shared out the three Zwartkops wins in May.

Visser went on to win four races in a row through Port Elizabeth and East London, before van der Merwe struck back with a couple of wins at Killarney, where Pretorius won the third race. Van der Merwe and Pretorius took a win apiece at the Zwartkops finale, where Visser cruised to the title from van der Merwe, Pretorius, Farhaan Basha, Nathan Victor, Jason Loosemore, and part-season driver Lupini.

The premier Global Touring Car champion is still to be decided by an MSA court of enquiry following a tumultuous season on track. That case will decide who of Saood Variawa’s Gazoo Racing Corolla or double reigning champion Robert Wolk’s Investchem BMW M128ti GTC is champion following a season full of controversy from the outset.

Variawa won the crunching Kyalami season opener before teammate Michael van Rooyen took the second race there. Variawa then struck again at Killarney, where home hero Andrew Rackstraw took his maiden win in the reverse grid race in his Golf. Gazoo Toyota duo, rookie Nathi Msimanga and veteran van Rooyen shared the Zwartkops wins, before Variawa and Wolk took a PE win apiece.

Wolk then did the double in East London, before Rackstraw won again at Killarney, where Wolk struck back with the reverse grid win. That set the stage for an epic and incident packed finale, where Rackstraw emerged the winner of the first race and Variawa took race 2 to provisionally beat Wok to the title by two points. An outstanding incident resolution however means that an MSA court is yet to decide who of Wolk or Variawa is champion.

Toyota Gazoo Racing’s twin leagues completed the Extreme Festival roadshow, where younger Variawa brother Sa'aad dominated to win twelve of fourteen Yaris League races. Racing lass Karah Hill and Nick Vostanis won the other two races. Setshaba Mashigo left Chad Luckhoff, Mark Jones, and Brendon Staniforth to fight over the GT86 League crumbs.

“2023 was another brilliant year of Extreme Festival National championship racing for Dunlop,” Sumitomo Tyres PR & Events Manager Joanne de Freitas concluded. “It had all the ingredients, from splendid success to great drama as Dunlop Tyres once again dominated all South Africa’s National tin-top championships. We salute every driver and team member who was part of making it all happen.”