

## **ABSA OFF ROAD CHAMPIONSHIP MAJOR FACELIFT TO ABSA OFF ROAD CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR**

The calendar for this year's Absa Off Road Championship has undergone a major facelift with the Soccer World Cup and a change in policy by the MSA Off Road Car Racing Commission leading to a reshuffle of events.

A new event also appears on the calendar for the first time with off road racing returning to Bloemfontein, the city of roses, for the first time in many years. The Bloemfontein 400 in October replaces the Eastern Cape 400.

"Because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup there is a moratorium on motorsport events from early June through to the middle of July and that forced a rethink in terms of traditional dates," said MSA Off Road Car Racing Commission president Richard Schilling. "We have also adopted a policy of trying to schedule race dates that take into account major events and climatic conditions in various regions.

"Climatic conditions have seen the Toyota Dealer 400 in Mpumalanga and the Carnival City 400 on the East Rand brought forward, the Toyota 1000 Desert Race has been put back because it falls in the World Cup window and the Bloemfontein 400 coincides with the Rose Festival in the city."

The season again kicks off with the Adenco 400 in the Western Cape on March 19/20, and is followed by the Toyota Dealer 400 in Lydenburg on April 16/17. In recent years the Toyota race has traditionally been run at the end of the season.

The Sugarbelt 400 in KwaZulu-Natal on May 21/22 leads up to the break for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Hostilities will resume on July 16/17 with the Sun City 400.

The Carnival City 400, an event with the reputation of being a "rainmaker", has been brought forward to August 27/28 and will be followed by the Toyota 1000 Desert Race on September 24/25/26. The Botswana race is normally run in June but defers to the World Cup.

The final two events of the season are the Bloemfontein 400 on October 22/23 and the RFS Magaliesberg 400 on November 19/20. Apart from taking off road racing back to the Free State, the Bloemfontein 400 will also provide teams with major financial saving in terms of travel costs.

"The calendar changes have provided a little additional spark to what promises to be another highly competitive season in the Production and Special Vehicle categories," said Schilling. "We are delighted to have Bloemfontein on the calendar, and in the various regions we again have a championship that makes off road racing easily accessible to both enthusiasts and new converts.

"A number of races this year will also incorporate regional championship events that are the nursery of the future, and the outlook for our sport is again one of extreme optimism."

Schilling added that additional interest would be generated by the usual pre season "musical chairs" with driver changes, crews switching between the Production and Special Vehicle classes and new machinery.

The opening event of the season, the Adenco 400, is again based in Darling on the West Coast of South Africa, and will be organised by the Cape Peninsula Motorcycle and Car Club.

Ends

ISSUED BY THE MSA OFF ROAD CAR RACING COMMISSION. PLEASE CONTACT CHARMAINE FORTUNE ON 011 462 6243 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

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REF: 2010 OR PR CALENDAR