**King Dawie makes Polo Cup his own**

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| * Dawie van der Merwe takes East London grand slam * Bezuidenhout one point ahead of Swart in title chase * CompCare Polo Cup title top six closer than ever |

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**Kariega 07 August 2022** – **Mbombela lad Dawie van der Merwe added to his hometown’s rugby glory when he delivered a spectacular grand slam of pole position, two race wins and fastest laps en route to his maiden CompCare Polo Cup victory in the East London Grand Prix Circuit’s Extreme Festival races on Saturday.**

In a dramatic day’s racing that saw the championship lead change and top six close up en route to the final two rounds of the season, Universal Motorsport lad van der Merwe gave early notice of his intentions with the benefit of a fresh engine. He turned a blistering pole lap in qualifying 0,7 seconds quicker than Cape Town teammate Charl Visser.

A similar gap covered the next ten cars with Gqeberha lad Clinton Bezuidenhout’s Stu Davidson & Sons car, Gauteng Aseda Squadra Corse driver Nathi Msimanga and two more Cape contenders, Tate Bishop’s Angri Racing car and blue Bullion IT Racing Polo driver Jurie Swart sneaking into the top six Superpole shootout.

Van der Merwe’s form continued into Superpole and he dashed around the circuit setting the quickest time 0,33 seconds ahead of Bezuidenhout, with Swart getting a good run in to finish up third from Visser, Msimanga and Bishop.

From the lights it was a two-by-two drag to Potters with all the cars somehow making through and then staying side-by-side through Rifle and even Cocobana. Until Charl Visser got well sideways in Gate, but hung on under huge pressure from Bishop and Swart, the latter giving him a tap as they entered the complex.

Heading up the hill to Beacon the three were doing a fair bit of ‘rubbing’ as van der Merwe started to stretch a bit of lead over Bezuidenhout. Still under huge pressure, but slightly more settled on the next lap, all except Universal lad Jason Loosemore, who was tapped by teammate Ethan Coetzee made it through, leaving Jason to re-join at the back.

Bezuidenhout was unable to make any impression on van der Merwe over the next few laps, but he could at least take comfort from the fact that his rivals in the championship were too busy fighting among themselves behind him to be much of a bother.

Midway into the race, the order was van der Merwe from Bezuidenhout, Swart, Visser, Bishop, Venter, Msimanga and Giordano Lupini‘s red Bullion IT Racing machine making good progress after falling to the back in avoidance of contact early on.

Van der Merwe remained in complete control through to his maiden CompCare Polo Cup victory from Bezuidenhout. Swart fended off Visser, Bishop and VDN Wright racer Dean Venter. The midfield action continued unabated with Lupini unseating Msimanga for seventh in the final lap.

Tate Bishop had drawn the second race pole position out of the hat from Swart, van der Merwe, Universal rookie Jagger Robertson and Bezuidenhout for race 2. Tate led the way into Cocobana on lap 1 as van der Merwe powered past Swart down the straight. Action down the field saw Lupini caught in a sandwich between Coetzee and Venter as that trio tried to avoid a wayward Msimanga coming out of Beacon.

That brought out the safety car as marshals swept the glass of two of Lupini’s smashed windows and other debris away, after the removal of which van der Merwe breezed past Bishop, with Swart also moving past Bishop into second. Two laps later, Bezuidenhout was also past Bishop into third as he set about Swart in what was to prove a tussle for the championship lead.

Bezuidenhout got his man on lap 7, while Visser also found a way by Bishop for fourth. Jason Loosemore had meanwhile kept out of trouble this time around, but was coming under pressure from Lupini, who had once again fought from the back of the pack to seventh after his earlier contratemps, with Venter and Universal trio, Robertson Mo Karodia and Coetzee in hot pursuit.

Then the latter trio attempted to go into the 210 km/h Potters Pass bend three abreast. A major incident followed as Robertson took the escape road, but Karodia and Coetzee touched, Coetzee’s bounced hard and disappeared into the thick Border bush. Karodia stopped and rushed to his teammate’s assistance as the race was red flagged and Ethan admitted to hospital with back injuries.

All of which meant the race was over and Dawie van der Merwe had taken a double maiden victory from championship rivals Bezuidenhout, Swart, Visser and Bishop. Loosemore was sixth from Lupini, Venter and Xolela Njumbuxa’s Squadra Corse car. Robertson was classified ninth from Coetzee and Karodia with Karah Hill 11th after Msimanga stopped.

Overall, van der Merwe took the day from Bezuidenhout, Swart, Visser and Lupini. Which means that Bezuidenhout now moves into the tightest of championship advantages by a single point over Swart, with  van der Merwe leading a close three way spat from Visser and Bishop, and Lupini, Msimanga and Venter not far adrift.

CompCare Polo Cup now moves on to Killarney in Cape Town, where new leader Bezuidenhout and superfast in East London van der Merwe will face Swart, Visser, Bishop and Lupini on their home ground. Should prove another cracker!

*Volkswagen thanks its partners CompCare Medical Scheme, Dunlop, Sonax, Motul and VW Genuine Parts.*

**Ends.**

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