HISTORIC RACING AT A PASSION FOR SPEED HIGH

New cars, drivers, classes & rules drive record HRSA entry

There’s palpable excitement in the air as Ben Morgenrood Group HRSA Historic Racing limbers up for the start of what many see as the most exciting new season in many a year at Saturday 28 January’s Zwartkops Passion for Speed. With new rules, revised classes, and a relaxed competitor entry point for 2023, something must be right, with a record 45 Sprint Race entries already in and 20 in Pursuit, and more still expected.

The 2023 HRSA Sprint championship will continue to be scored two-thirds off each driver’s actual race result plus a third based on an index score considering each car’s fastest lap of the race, versus its average race time. So, Ben Morgenrood Historic Sprint racing rewards consistency almost as much it does speed, with champions crowned in each of the Sprint, Index and most importantly, overall categories.

A new Pre-‘90 Classic Saloon and GT category replaces the old Sports & GTs, to allow a number of cars previously excluded because of certain restrictions, to return. That should see more Porsches, Mazda Capellas and RX 7s, Datsun Skylines and the like joining the HRSA grid. All that has attracted the biggest Ben Morgenrood Historic Sprint Racing field in years to the Passion for Speed weekend.

Up front, Gqeberha visitor Rudolf de Vos can be expected to toss his mighty Little Chev Can-Am V8 cat among the Andre van der Merwe’s Evapco and Richard Pott Porsche RSR pigeons. Add Rob Prece’s ex Manufacturer’s Challenge spaceframe Power King VW Golf MK1 GTi. They will have to be on their toes to keep Class C champion Stuart Konig and Jannie van Rooyen’s yellow peril Pro Auto Rubber VW Sciroccos, and newcomer Herman Kruger’s Class C Porsche RSR at bay.

Class D champion Gavin Lundin’s Silverguard Datsun 1200 GX has newcomer Travis Jensen’s similar Hamilton's car, Andre ten Napel’s TNMC and Fred Konig’ Northern Bolt Sciroccos, Rene Jansen van Rensburg’s svTech Escort and Evelthon Rotsides and Sophos Pantazis Datsun 240Zs to contend with. As does Class E champion Sean Hepburn’s AA Datsun 1200 Deluxe have Franz and Peder Jensen, and Ian Kilburn’s GX Coupes to cope with. Also watch for Riaan Roux, Dave Leyshon, Terence Ladner, and young Jono Konig‘s Sciroccos, Cape lad Daniel Lotter’s Escort, Stefan Puschavez Porsche and Peter Lanz’ Fiat Uno in Class E.

Class F presents a classic 1970s 2-litre touring car racing picture. Paul Maegold and

John Bronner’s Alfa GT Juniors and Gerreth Ferreria’s GTV take on Cor Kraamwinkel’s BMW 2002, and George and Derick Smalberger, Willem Vonk and Greg Steen’s Ford Escorts. Champion John Simpson’s Evoke car, and Jan Jacobs’s similar Olifantsfontein Alfa Romeo GT Juniors take on old Class G rivals Tihan van Rooyen’s Van Rooyen Vision Porsche 924 and Colin Green’s Mazda 323. Add newcomers, Cameron Foster’s Datsun 140Y Josef Kotze, and Johan van der Walt’s Mercedes 280Es. Hendrik van Zyl’s Evoke Ford Anglia races in Class H.

In another HRSA change for 2023, the new Youngtimer class now shifts across from the Pursuit series, where they raced for their first year in 2022, to the Sprint class for the new season. Supertouring-like Youngtimer entries expected for the Passion weekend include Honda Ballade pair, Mike O'Sullivan and Robert Clark’s Containerforce car, and Tiaan Smith’s JMS Nissan Sentra 200STi. Five more Youngtimer cars, including an Alfa Romeo, a Volvo, an Opel Astra, Nissan Sentra and another Honda, are understood to be in build.

The 2023 Ben Morgenrood HRSA Historic Pursuit Championship likewise blasts off at Passion for Speed this weekend. Run purely on handicap, the slowest car starts first, the fastest last, with their ideal time all being identical at the line. A game of cunning and intrigue, drivers will be excluded if they break out of their minimum lap time, as the racing becomes fraught and filled with overtaking as competitors approach the finish line.

Reigning champion Wernher Hartzenberg returns to action in the Fines class aboard his wieldy Air Cooled Wonders Porsche 916. He will face old rivals, Rob van Aarle’s Ace Auto Ford Escort MK1 and Mercedes 190E duo Machiel Oberholzer and Andre Hattingh. Add old hands, Johann Smith’s Nissan Skyline and Johan Gouws’ VW Scirocco.

Modified class champion Althea Pretorius’ Carinvest Nissan Exa is back to take on the experienced Kola de Klerk’s Nissan 300ZX, Willem van Niekerk’s Marauder and Riaan Roux’s Scirocco. Add Alfa Romeo gang Gerrit Murray and Gerreth Ferreria’s GTVs, Paul Maegold and John Bronner’s GT Juniors and Hilton Ewart’s Alfetta, Stan Stacey’s Ford Cortina, Greg White’s Escort Les McLeod in an MG B, and Mercedes 280 man Jose Vasques.

The Ben Morgenrood Historic Racing classes race alongside a cracking full Zwartkops Passion for Speed line-up, with qualifying Friday and racing all day Saturday 28 January. The meering features the finest classic and contemporary racecars driven by the best South African and international drivers in a thrilling festival of racing. Circuit entry is R200 per adult, R120 for students and kids under 12 get in free. Learn more at www.zwartkops.co.za or enquire at info@zwartkops.co.za.