**CHAMPION STEPHEN RETURNS TO SATC AT KYALAMI**

*Michael returns to add extra allure to wild Kyalami Touring cars*

While Chemical Logistics BMW 128TC championship leader Robert Wolk plans to fend Gazoo Toyota Corolla TC rivals Saood Variawa and Nathi Msimanga off at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit’s blockbuster Extreme Festival on Saturday 13 April, the big news surrounds the driver of the second FlySafair Chemical Logistics BMW 128TC. Multiple former champion Michael Stephen makes a welcome Touring Car return on the big day.

Michael will make a once off appearance aboard the pink candy hued BMW in place of regular pilot Andy Schofield, who will be abroad for a personal matter. Stephen’s return can never be taken lightly, for not only is the four-time former champion still quite familiar with South African Touring Car machinery, but he has also remained competitive at the sharp end of the GT3 Supercar grid of late. His return could very well shake the South African Touring Cars pecking order up at Kyalami.

Of the regular drivers, Wolk hit the ground running in the opening round to take pole position, the full-points feature race win and a hard-earned come from behind third in the half points reverse grid second heat. That was enough to see Robert arrive at his home race in a ten-point advantage. Which is probably the biggest championship gap in recent SATC memory. He cannot take it for granted however, as Variawa and Msimanga, who sit tied in second, and the rest will be keen to turn that deficit around, pronto.

Among them, Julian van der Watt impressed out the box despite his brand new Investchem Volkswagen Golf TC never turning a wheel before it arrived at Killarney. Michael van Rooyen showed good pace, but he endured a troubled weekend in Cape Town aboard the third Gazoo Toyota Corolla TC. And young Polo Cup graduate Anthony Pretorius impressed on debut in his OMP LTR Toyota Corolla TC. Any of them can win, and considering last year’s Kyalami Touring Car dramas, will it be wild again?

Moving on to the SATC SupaCup action, the Kyalami action ought to be just as fierce and wild. Volkswagen Motorsport SupaPolo racing with Astron Energy duo, rookie Charl Visser and old hand Jonathan Mogotsi shared out the wins last time. Keegan Campos’ similar Campos Transport car however scored two seconds to lead the way to Kyalami, where he won both races last year. Two championship points split the three of them.

Cape lad David Franco starred at home aboard his Graphix Supply World SupaPolo Cup to arrive at Kyalami fourth in the chase ahead of champion Bradley Liebenberg. All will be watching Brad’s progresses in his second outing aboard the all-new Gazoo Toyota Starlet SupaCup. He resumes battle with SupaPolo rivals, Tate Bishop’s Angri LTR car, Kalex lass Karah Hill, Dean Venter looking for a step up abord his VDN Auto M-Town entry, Trinity Mokopane lad Nathan Hammond, and GR graduate Nicolas Vosatnis.

Kyalami’s round has lured a number of drivers back to race SATC SupaCup. They include rapid duo, Jason Campos’ Turn 1 Insurance car, and Tato Carello’s Carello Auto version, and Chemi brothers Calvin and Dominic Dias. Masters duo Jean-Pierre van der Walt’s Platinum Wheels car and Andre Bezuidenhout Bertha Wines SupaPolo also make a return at the blockbuster Festival.

The South African Touring Cars practice on Thursday, qualify Friday and race twice at 10h45, and again at 15h55 on Saturday. It’s all part of the epic dawn to dusk blockbuster double header National and Regional Extreme Festival. See you at Kyalami!