



MOTORSPORT SOUTH AFRICA NPC

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REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR THE MSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2023

The year got off to a great start with a South African-built Toyota Gazoo Racing Hilux again winning the Dakar Rally, with another two TGR cars in the top 5 overall finishing positions for good measure. The South African Rally Raid Championship is the breeding ground for such Dakar success and the strong car-building industry it is supported by. It is a series, and success story, we can all be proud of.

Something else to be proud of was South Africa's successful hosting of the FIA Formula E World Championship for the first time on the streets of Cape Town in February of this year. The event was extremely well received by the Formula E community and it marked a fantastic achievement on the part of the local event organisers.

Cape Town was also the host city for the FIM African Motocross of Nations held earlier this month and won again by the South African team. My thanks to the MSA team, led by MSA Motocross Commission President Neville Townsend for all their hard work in delivering a highly successful event.

The start of the year also saw the return of Rotax karting to the MSA fold after two years away. It is indeed a good thing for all of South African karting, the 'nursery' of motorsport, to once again be united under the MSA umbrella and we look forward to this category of the sport continuing to grow and play a significant role in the vital area of transformation.

Towards the end of last year MSA engaged the services of a PR agency on a monthly retainer basis. The brief to the agency was to raise awareness of motorsport in the public consciousness, with the aim of growing the sport and hopefully assisting efforts by all motorsport stakeholders to obtain sponsorship support. Various competitors and initiatives have been showcased in stories that have been published in the media and one of the most interesting things for me has been the number of stories that have been run in community newspapers, with a wide reach. Any members with motorsport stories or initiatives they would like publicized, at no cost, are invited to make contact with me and MSA will do all it can to assist.

MOTORSPORT SOUTH AFRICA IS THE ONLY RECOGNISED MOTORSPORT FEDERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA



Thanks to Kuven Govender and his team comprising the MSA Drag Racing Working Group, drag racing in 2023 is seeing a strong revival under the auspices of MSA. A national challenge is being run this year and is enjoying encouraging support. Drag racing is one of the more accessible forms of motorsport and drag racers are known for being passionate about their sport so hopefully it will continue to go from strength to strength.

MSA recently launched a new website, aimed at being more user-friendly and informative. Due to the nature of MSA's business, its website needs to contain a lot of information, which was not always easy to navigate on the previous version. We believe the new version to be a lot better in this regard and have received positive feedback. I encourage those who have not yet visited the new website to do so, and I also invite constructive feedback to help make it even better.

As you are aware, MSA recently conducted anonymous surveys to assess the state of the sport and the perceptions of MSA. Three separate surveys were distributed to competitors, race officials and promoters/organisers. As is normally the case with surveys, a relatively small percentage were completed and returned but this can be viewed as a positive if we assume that those that are really unhappy would have completed the survey. Of the surveys that were completed and returned, the feedback was largely positive, with some constructive input and useful suggestions being made.

The overarching sentiment expressed in the surveys is that the sport has become extremely expensive and the environment has therefore become extremely challenging. This is obviously true, given that motorsport is a sport, probably more than any other, that relies heavily on disposable income and this is something in short supply in the very weak local economy we are experiencing. Inflation, a weak Rand and high fuel prices only add to the challenges and MSA's sincere thanks go to all of those, from competitors to race organisers/promoters, who are keeping the sport alive in what are very tough times. Motorsport is driven by passion and this is indeed very evident in the current environment. Like everyone else, MSA is hoping for national election results in 2024, and other measures, that will stimulate the local economy and improve the economic outlook for all South Africans.

There is a lot to process in the survey results but some of the main takeaways can be summarized as follows:

- A culture of mutual respect is very necessary between race officials and competitors/parents.
- Motorsport regulations need to be enforced fairly and consistently.
- Knowledge of the motorsport regulations is often sadly lacking amongst competitors and sometimes even amongst race officials - more and better education is required.
- The training of marshals and other race officials needs improvement. *Comment: This is an area that MSA will be actively working on addressing.*
- The motorsport calendar needs to be respected. While event cancellations for unforeseen events such as floods are understood, cancellations for no apparent good reason, and with very little notice, are less so.
- MSA's website needs to be easier to navigate and more user-friendly. *Comment: Hopefully this has been addressed as mentioned above.*

- New race officials often feel sidelined by what they see as the ‘old guard’ when they could learn so much from these very experienced people if they were made to feel more welcome.
- A ‘tick box’ procedure should be implemented for officials to use when applying penalties.
- There should be greater transparency with regard to the outcome of racing related incidents and hearings.
- There should be a national register of penalties imposed on competitors.
- The spreading of rumours regarding cheating, without evidence, is unfair and damaging.
- MSA should do whatever it can to change the wider public’s perception of motorsport. *Comment: As mentioned earlier in this report, this was the primary motivation behind getting a PR agency on board.*
- MSA should provide more statistical information (social media reach, etc.) to promoters and organisers to assist them in their quest to obtain sponsorship funding. *Comment: This will be treated as another priority project.*
- The all-round cost of running events has sky-rocketed.
- MSA should do more to advertise events that are taking place. *Comment: MSA already does this via its website and social media platforms but will seek ways to improve on what is already being done.*
- Where these don’t already exist, there should be pre-event checklists put in place to assist promoters and organisers.
- More of a partnership relationship should be fostered between MSA and promoters/organisers.
- MSA staff members should ‘get closer’ to race officials. *Comment: In recent weeks, MSA management and staff have introduced an ‘open mic’ type of session for the senior race officials on the Monday evening following national championship events. The idea is to promote informal conversation between race officials and MSA staff members, as well as amongst the race officials themselves, to stimulate problem-solving and a greater sense of community.*

I would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the surveys. As already mentioned, there is a lot to process with regard to the survey results but MSA is committed to doing whatever it reasonably can to positively respond to the valid points made. Some things can be done relatively quickly while others will take a bit longer. However, we will do what we can to make things better.

In closing, I repeat my sincere thanks to everyone involved in local motorsport, in whatever capacity, for keeping the sport going in very challenging circumstances. We look forward to the sport continuing its post-Covid recovery in a positive way, hopefully assisted by an improved economy in the months ahead.



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