



# THE MIDLANDS

## MTB STAGE RACE

June 29-July 1, 2018 Howick/Karkloof



### *KZN Midlands Stage Race Media Release*

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#### **Hill and Liebenberg start Midlands with a big win**

AS EXPECTED, the TIB Insurance Silverback duo of Andrew Hill and Henry Liebenberg opened up a substantial lead on the opening day of the Midlands MTB Stage Race which started in Howick on Friday.

The pair were far too strong for their rivals and led home young Jordan Wisdom, the leading solo rider, by almost 13 minutes while the leading mixed team of the husband and wife combination of Jeannie and Martin Dreyer claimed third, just over a minute further back.

Hill and Liebenberg completed the 56km opening stage in a very quick time of one hour 58 minutes and 20 seconds, with Wisdom finishing in 2:11:05 and the Dreyers crossing the line in 2:12:28.

Norvyn Pitout and Byron Ekerold are second men's team with Hayley Smith and Dale Allan claiming second in the mixed category. Leading woman is Natalie Bergstrom who is riding solo.

Hill was raving about the route and the organisation after he crossed the line: "It was really beautiful out there today," said the experienced race leader.

"We got away early and then rode hard to build a gap. We set a good hard pace all day, but it was nice to be able to take in the views as well.

"The route was very well thought out and very well marked, you could not fault (course designer) Gavin Ryan for that at all. It was a superb day of riding.

"The first half was fairly flat with some nice wide open cruising sections as we went along the banks of Midmar Dam and then some big climbs around the back of the dam, before we headed back home.

"The organisation has been perfect, and I think the lunch after the finish today was one of the best I have ever had at a race."

Saturday's second stage takes the riders on a 59km journey from Howick, past the Mandela Capture site to Lion's River, Lidgetton and Curry's Post before riders meander their way back to the race village at Howick High School. On Saturday the three-day riders will be joined by the two-day entrants and half-marathon two-day competitors.

Results in brief: Day 1

Teams:

1 Andrew Hill / Henry Liebenberg 1:58:20

2 Martin Dreyer / Jeannie Dreyer (1st mixed) 2:12:28

3 Norvyn Pitout / Byron Ekerold 2:19:53

4 Harley Smith / Dale Allan (2nd mixed) 2:31:16

Solo Men:

1 Jordan Wisdom 2:11:05

2 Matthew Myburgh 2:25:01

3 Justin Lourens 2:25:22

Solo Women:

1 Natalie Bergstrom 2:23:42

2 Caroline Francis 2:47:23

For more information visit [www.themidlandsmtb.co.za](http://www.themidlandsmtb.co.za)

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<i>Photo</i>	<i>Caption</i>	<i>Photographer</i>	<i>Click to download high-res pics</i>
	The Midlands MTB Stage Race Logo	No photo credit required	<a href="#">Download Here</a>
	Andrew Hill and Henry Liebenberg get up close with the wildlife near Midmar Dam as they build a big lead on the opening stage of The Midlands MTB Stage Race on Friday.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	<a href="#">Download Here</a>
	Andrew Hill and Henry Liebenberg cross the Umgeni River above Midmar Dam during the opening stage of The Midlands MTB Stage Race on Friday.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	<a href="#">Download Here</a>
	Husband and wife team of Martin (left) and Jeannie Dreyer have some fun as they cruise to victory in the mixed category at the opening stage of The Midlands MTB Stage Race on Friday.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	<a href="#">Download Here</a>
	An unidentified rider is silhouetted against Midmar Dam during the opening stage of The Midlands MTB Stage Race on Friday.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	<a href="#">Download Here</a>

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