



THE MIDLANDS

MTB STAGE RACE

June 29-July 1, 2018 Howick/Karkloof



KZN Midlands Stage Race Media Release

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By: Tim Whitfield

Midlands Stage Race opens up new opportunities

Andrew Hill, the winner of this weekend's Midlands MTB Stage Race is one of KZN's most respected mountain bikers, so when this elder statesman of the sport enthuses about the organisation of an event it is worth noting.

After notching up three wins from three stages with his young teenage partner Henry Liebenberg over the weekend, Hill was not short of praise for the organisation of the first-time race.

"I could not fault anything on the organisation," said Hill after crossing the line with Liebenberg to notch up an overall victory of almost 30 minutes over second placed overall and first solo rider Jordan Wisdom.

"The route was really well prepared which is obviously important for us riders and they had done so much to make sure the trails were perfect. You could not fault the marking and even all the leaves and pine needles had been swept off the track to make sure the route was perfectly prepared. The riding was about as good as it could get."

With the mountain biking scene becoming crowded with stage races, race organisers are being forced to up their game to stay competitive and riders are no longer content simply to arrive at a venue and ride overused trails for the day.

Race organiser Johnny St Clair Gibson has come from a background of organising professional golf tournaments and brought his experience of dealing with pampered professional golfers and attention to detail to "the new golf", something that was not missed by the riders.

Hill was not the only rider to enthuse about the organisation with Natalie Bergstrom, the first solo woman home, filling her Instagram with enthusiastic posts throughout the weekend: After the first stage she posted a picture of chocolate cake and strawberries which riders enjoyed for lunch after their ride; and followed that up with "... again we were treated like royalty with a scrumptious lunch," after the second stage; and wrapped it up with an enthusiastic "... 3 days of awesome new riding routes, top class food for kings and queens, great goodie bag and happiness all round ..."

If there was anything negative about the event it was the relatively small field of riders, but it seems likely that once the word gets out about the slick organisation and great route there will be a flood of entries for the 2019 event – and St Clair Gibson is going to struggle to top that chocolate cake and strawberries!

Overall race results after Day 3

Teams:

- 1 Andrew Hill / Henry Liebenberg 6:41:39
- 2 Martin Dreyer / Jeannie Dreyer (1st mixed) 7:37:46
- 3 Norvyn Pitout / Byron Ekerold 8:29:56
- 4 Harley Smith / Dale Allan (2nd mixed) 8:36:55

Solo Men:

- 1 Jordan Wisdom 7:09:00

2 Matthew Myburgh 8:26:46

3 Justin lourens 8:35:12

Solo Women:

1 Natalie Bergstrom 8:10:52

2 Caroline Francis 10:26:57

Two Day Solo

1 Sanele Tshabalala 5:25:26

2 Sheldon Bode 5:53:20

3 Jeremy Thomson 5:54:07

END

For more information visit 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	Download Here
	Riders cross a bridge above the Caversham Mill Falls, just one of the many beauty spots on the scenic Midlands MTB Stage Race.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here
	Andrew Hill (front) and Henry Liebenberg cruising to a lonely victory at The Midlands MTB Stage Race.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here
	Jeannie Dreyer (left) and husband Martin claimed the mixed category trophies at The Midlands MTB Stage Race.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here
	Natalie Bergstrom (left) celebrates winning the women's solo category with The Midlands MTB Stage Race organiser Johnny St Clair Gibson.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here
	Natalie Bergstrom negotiates a section of single track on her way to victory in The Midlands MTB Stage Race.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here
	Andrew Hill (left) and Henry Liebenberg celebrate after three wins from three stages at The Midlands MTB Stage Race.	Photo: Paul Henman/ Paul Henman Photography	Download Here

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Sports Wrighte

072 12 52 382

whitfield.tj@gmail.com