Press Release

Sasol GTC2

Review: Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit, 22 April 2017.

**SIGNATURE MOTORSPORT MINI JOHN COOPER WORKS TEAM RACKS UP THE POINTS AT KYALAMI.**

**Kyalami/Midrand.** The Signature MINI John Cooper Works Team continued their upward momentum at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit last weekend, scene of round two of the Sasol GTC2 series. Chris Shorter raced his Champion MINI to fifth place overall with Brad Liebenberg a place further back his Ferodo example.

Qualifying showed that the MINIs were nearer the pace of their rivals in just their second race outing, while Chris Shorter and Brad Liebenberg continue to adjust their driving styles to suit the turbopetrol, ABS-equipped cars.

Qualifying was disappointing for Chris, who said he made too many small mistakes, setting his fastest time in his last flying lap. Brad had a solid qualifying session after finding a full second from his best free practice time on Friday. Brad lined up fourth and Chris in sixth place on the grid.

In race one, Brad took part in his first ever rolling start and held his position throughout the race, glued to the leading train of VWs ahead. Behind him, Chris had a great race with Charl Smalberger (VW Golf) vigorously defending his line for lap after lap. In was a tough mental joust, but eventually Smalberger found a way past and Chris ended sixth.

The second race featured an inverted grid, giving Chris second and Brad the third slot on the grid. Chris had a great fight with Keagan Masters (VW Golf) and Brad over the opening phase of the race, but the fully developed VWs swamped the MINI as the race wore on, leaving Chris in fifth place which earned the Champion driver fifth overall on the day.

Brad too, defended his position in a great scrap with former team-mate Keagan Masters. Places changed as the young drivers battled it out, passing and re-passing each other. Late in the race, Brad’s car developed a misfire, causing the MINI to go into limp mode. Brad pulled off the track, disappointed after the progress both he and the team made over the weekend.

**Quotes from the cockpit:**

**Chris Shorter (#33 Champion MINI):** “The MINI feels so much better with the limited slip diff fitted. I can now transfer the power to the road. I am still coming to terms with the turbo-charged engine which requires a completely different driving style to what I am used to. I made too many mistakes in qualifying so there is a lot more performance to come from me. We are closer to the front-running times, which is encouraging given that our competitors have a year of development on us. The racing was great and I had a few good scraps in the races”.

**Brad Liebenberg (#12 Ferodo):** “The team did a phenomenal job repairing my MINI after Cape Town. It feels the way it did before my accident. The new differential makes a massive difference. I was up into third place by turn one, but then the Golfs swamped me and I had a lonely race, hanging on to them as best I could. In race two, I started third and the first few laps were quite hectic. I tried to defend my place by putting my car in just the right place but you can’t do it for the whole race. I had a great race with Keagan. Our progress is encouraging and I can’t wait for East London”.

The next outing for the Signature MINI John Cooper Works team is at East London on 20th May.

**ENDS**

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