

Press release of Namibian Teams competing at SA International FEI Challenge in Beaufort West, SA

Most team members arrived at Beaufort West on Monday 1 June in time for the riders briefing and Namibian Squad information session. Out rides were done every morning and team managers had the opportunity to evaluate horses and make recommendations.

We managed to secure the help of Dr. Marc Walton, one of the most respected treatment veterinarians in the world, as our team vet. We are grateful for his loyalty towards Namibia as he was always available for advice and treatment before the ride.

After inspecting the first loop, we had great concern for the safety of our horses and riders. Departure times were scheduled for 03:10 and 03:50 and 04:30 which meant that the dangerous first loop would be ridden in the dark. After several meetings with the Organizing Committee (OC), they changed the departure time of the Young riders to 05:30. This grant was a great step forward. The OC also planned to split the departure times of classes; individual riders and team riders departing at different times, which had the implication that riders did not know who they were competing against and also did not know the time difference between themselves and the leaders. The OC was extremely receptive to all the requests and concerns of the Namibian Squad and many logistical changes were made to the benefit of horses and riders.

To further complicate the management of the teams, the time keepers could not guarantee to give us results after every loop. Team results were out of the question. Eventually we obtained results after the first and second loops. Therefore we could not advise the teams during the ride if they should go faster or slower. We could only use the sequence in which the opposition riders arrived at the ride base after every loop.

Compliments about the appearance, organization, conduct and horsemanship of the Namibian Squad was received from various platforms during the entire event. The President of the Endurance Riding Association of SA, Mr. Ren Lubbinge, said in his speech that the Namibians were doing their country proud.

The coherent spirit of the riders was tangible and contagious and was instrument to the victory.

The Ride

The two Senior teams departed at 04:30 together with the National Teams of SA, France and Great Britain as well as the SA provincial teams. The strategy was to ride competitively yet safely and let the other teams ride themselves out of the race.

Heavy Weights:

David Botha on Zagal did not pass the pre-ride check and we were left with only five riders. We asked Shanie Bosch to load herself to 95 kg and she accepted without hesitation. As team managers we have great respect for her unselfish loyalty towards the teams.

The plan was successful when three of the SA riders were eliminated after the first loop and a fourth rider was eliminated after the second loop. The responsible way in which our experienced riders executed their plan was the final nail in the SA team's coffin.

The results between the two teams show that the Namibians were by far the superior team. The only two South Africans finishers were in 1st and 12th place. The Namibians finishers were: Rudlof Oosthuizen 3rd

Gawie Viljoen	4 th
Shanie Bosch	7 th
Danie Delport	10 th
Kallie Grunschloss	11 th
Johan van der Walt	Lame after 2 nd loop

Standard Weight:

Namibia took the lead with 30 minutes after the first loop. After the second loop the lead increased to 48 minutes and one of the SA team members was eliminated. After the third loop two more SA team members were eliminated because they could not keep up with the high speed of the Namibian riders

and they paid the price for their gamble. Victory was sweet when the Namibian team finished ahead of SA, France and Great Britain.

Results:

Jeremia Goagoseb	2 nd
Bredell Wessels	4 th
Frans Saubek	6 th
Collin Tjanda	7 th
Sam Kriel	16 th
Simon Hangura	28 th
Hannelie Coetzee	40 th
Stefanus Pienaar	Eliminated at final inspection

Young Riders:

Due to the absence of the availability of results we could only advise the team after the second loop that they were only 7 minutes ahead. Sokkies was eliminated after the first loop with a marginal lameness. He did not receive any treatment from the treatment vet as he could not find any lameness.

Snorkie was eliminated after the second loop for metabolic reasons. Mubarak was eliminated at the end of the ride for lameness at the final inspection. This was the third team member to be eliminated and this meant that we were out of the team competition. We were leading until the final inspection when Mubarak was eliminated. A great disappointment! Just to show how close the competition was. To show how close the competition was we made the following calculation if Anna/Mubarak had finished:

The total time for the Namibian Young Rider team would have been 24:00:52 and the total time for the SA team was 25:47:08. We would have won them with 01:47.

Results:

Chante Nell	1 st
Christine van Zyl	4 th
Conrad van der Walt	16 th
Recht Burger	17 th
Schalk Burger	18 th
Kabous Rossouw	20 th
Anna Wucher	Lame at finish

Susan Badenhorst 2nd loop metabolic
Devon Bolleurs 1st loop

Results

The Namibian Teams won the Senior Standard Weight and Heavy Weight divisions. The individual Namibian riders performed well and ended in the following positions:

Senior Standard Weight 120,7 km:

Izolde von Schauroth 3rd
Adri van Zyl 27th
Judie Wiese Eliminated at final inspection

Young riders 120,7 km:

Fritz Konjak 3rd
Cherne de Meyer 18th
Wilhelm Laubsher 15th
Marlene van Rensburg (Erasa 120km) 7th

Young Rider FEI 81,09km

Johan Bredenkamp 1st

Of the 15 horses that were nominated for the Best Conditioned Competition in the three categories in which we competed, 8 were Namibian horses. We won two of the three awards; Chante Nell on Henham Zahara in the Young riders category and Izolde von Schauroth on Zabubega Tushiya.