

SOUTH AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE APRIL 2011 – RIDE REVIEW

Nylstroom/Modimolle

By; Lizet Kotze

Photography; H2 Photography, Johan Steyn Photography



The annual SA International Challenge for endurance riders and horses took place in April and was hosted by the Northern Endurance Union. The venue was near the town of Nylstroom in the heart of the Bushveld in the lovely Limpopo province. Nowadays known as Modimolle, Nylstroom is near the southern edge of the Waterberg Biosphere, which stretches from Nylstroom to the north of SA and covers approximately 15 000 km².

Nylstroom's official name was changed to Modimolle in 2002, although Nylstroom is still commonly in use. The original name was given by the Voortrekkers who came across the north-flowing river and mistook the river for the Nile river of Egypt.

Modimolle comes from the Tswana phrase "Modimo o lle", meaning "the spirits have eaten", after the tradition of offering food to the forefathers' spirits by traditional tribes in the area.

As the main town of the Waterberg District, Modimolle boasts numerous activities and is a tourist attraction because of the huge variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. But in April this year, all activities were centred around the International Endurance Challenge where SA, Namibia, Botswana and Argentina's riders battled it out with super fit horses to show off their best abilities in the harsh Bushveld heat and sand over 120 km.

Although the dreaded African Horse Sickness outbreak this year was extensive, and cases have been seen in the Modimolle area, it didn't prevent horse owners from all over the country from participating at this prestigious event. Riders from the Western Cape, who had to move their horses back to their province, had to adhere to strict regulations which involved a stopover at Beaufort West for three weeks to make sure they were not infected with the AHS virus while at Modimolle.

Horse owners were well informed about the possibilities of this highly infectious, insect-borne viral disease and severe precautions were taken to prevent any casualties. The typical beautiful Bushveld



nights, filled with braai flavours, were complemented with the familiar odour of insect repellent to ensure that no midges within a mile would feel welcome at this venue!

Competitors flooded into Modimolle from all corners of South Africa as well as the neighbouring countries, while seven riders from Argentina as well as individual riders, Vallerie Kanavy of the United States and Samantha Yates from the UK, added to the international flavour of the event.

At the welcome function at Weesgerus Holiday Resort, Mr Makhafola, on behalf of the executive mayor of the Modimolle local municipality, addressed and welcomed all distinguished guests. The President of the Northern Union, Niel Kirstein, as host of the event in co-operation with the Alma Endurance Club chairman, Marius Fourie, provided for a big surprise when well-known SA singer and composer, Franna Benadé, was called to the stage to perform a song specially written for the event.

South Africa International Challenge - Nylstroom 7 April 2011 - ERASA results					
Position	Rider	Horse	Time	Actual speed	Corrected speed
121,47 km ERASA Heavy weight category					
1	Callie de Bruyn	Izra Conyack	7:46:14	15,64	22,34
2	Johan Rost	Hurst Texas	7:47:48	15,58	22,28
3	Wiesman Nel	Moolmanshoek Johny Boy	7:58:30	15,24	21,94
4	Rossouw van Reenen	Juta	8:26:18	14,40	21,10
5	Gary Purchase	Scrumba	8:53:01	13,68	20,38
121,47 km ERASA Senior standard weight category					
1	Johan du Toit	Anthar	6:15:24	19,42	26,12
2	Christo Scheepers	Road Block	6:49:49	17,79	24,49
3	Lauren Louwrens	Blakeridge Calliper	7:24:41	16,39	23,09
4	Shoranee Munn	Sprite	7:36:55	15,95	22,65
5	Godfrey Macala	Golden Cross Baryne	7:56:49	15,29	21,99
121,47 km ERASA Light weight category					
1	Diana Hoffman	Playboy	6:56:54	17,49	24,19
2	Amor Voges	Brandbacht	7:47:38	15,59	22,29
3	Mietie Fick	Anroe Ramat	7:56:37	15,30	22,00
4	Menita Renison	Welbach Silver Charlotte	8:11:57	14,82	21,52
5	Melanie Bezuidenhout	Star Dust Shariek	9:07:12	13,32	20,02
121,47 km ERASA Young rider / junior category					
1	Schalk Fourie	Shakira	5:55:25	20,51	27,21
2	Ninine Erasmus	Fidel	6:28:37	18,76	25,46
3	Rayn Willemse	Benlarich Malik	6:30:23	18,67	25,37
4	Carli Cilliers	Janor Kalahari	7:05:14	17,14	23,84
5	Alicia Rohrbeck	Sanniesguns Challenge	7:25:20	16,37	23,07
121,47 km ERASA Child category					
1	Julius Ackermann	Skim	8:26:18	14,40	21,10



An atmosphere of expectation prevailed with the announcement of the different teams and the excitement of all was tangible. Mr Makhafola's message to the riders was: "To the competing teams, we say, let the best teams win!". With this in mind, an enormous number of 319 excited horses and riders departed early in the morning on Thursday 7 April.

The day before the ride, a few thunderstorms wet the thick, sandy terrain and cool and cloudy temperatures were experienced. But on the day of the ride, the day broke with clear, sunny skies and predicted hot temperatures with high humidity. Combined with the thick sand, the ingredients were a sure recipe for the downfall of many disappointed riders who failed to finish the ride.

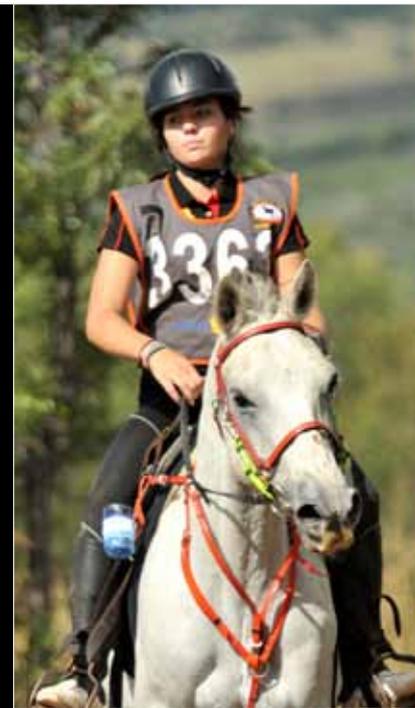
A total of 242 FEI riders started, with 77 riders in the ERASA category. The 120 km course consisted of four loops – 40



Callie de Bruyn & Izra Conyack



Johan du Toit & Anthar



Diana Hoffman & Playboy

km, 40 km, 30 km and 20 km. The FEI category dominated the event and was characterised by stiff competition between the frontrunners.

The young rider division yielded fierce competition between twin sisters Reze and Winel Barnard with their respective horses, Starla and Lucky. Only a few seconds separated the sisters at the finish line in first and second place, while Elaine van der Merwe and Esmak Shabier earned a third place, only a few seconds behind them. Esmak Shabier was the winner of Best Conditioned horse in this category.

The SA National young rider team won the international competition with the SA Development team in second place and Namibia in third position. On the provincial side, the North Western riders proved to be very competitive with the North West Development team in first place, followed by the North West team and Eastern Cape in third place. Furthermore, 37 young riders in the FEI competition finished the ride, with 24 eliminations.

The heavyweight division started off as a battle between Namibian, George Wessels with his horse Simmenau Jellica, and Gavie Viljoen with Zabubega Manna, but after the first 70 km it was almost certain that George had the race in his pocket. George won the division convincingly in a time of 05:49:12, which was 22 minutes ahead of Rassie Erasmus of SA with Lamorte in second place.

Only 15 heavyweight riders completed the race successfully and 24 were eliminated. In the international competition between SA and Namibia, no place was taken on the podium by either teams, as not enough team members finished the ride to qualify for a ranking. The Provincial competition in this category was won by the North West Union.

The no weight category in the FEI competition was won by Namibian, Danjiella Himmel and Twin, with an actual speed of 20.62 km/h and Twin was also nominated as the Best Conditioned horse in this category. Louise Jordaan, who represented the Provincial Northern Gauteng team, with Kromar Shar Yanica, followed in second place with a total slip time of only two minutes and 52 seconds throughout the 120 km distance! Cherne' de Meyer from Namibia with Antiqua followed in Louise's footsteps to earn a well-deserved third place, only one second ahead of fellow Namibian rider Franzi Marais with Sekelbos Anastasia in fourth place.

The no weight category's riders experienced more success than some of the other categories as only 12 of the original 37 starters were eliminated. The SA ERASA team won this competition with Namibia in second place. In the provincial competition, the Northern Union took the honours with M&G Union in second place.

The most competitive division with the biggest participation of riders was the FEI senior competition where a total of 105 riders and horses challenged each other to earn the favourite top 10 positions! But the disappointments were just as big as almost 50% of the riders were eliminated with an actual counting of 53 finishers and 52 eliminations.

The FEI senior competition was a tug-of-war between two Namibian riders and a South African. Sameul Afrikaner, rider for well-known horse breeders, Jannie and Judie Wiese of Wiejandrie Horses from the Witvlei area in the eastern side of Namibia, Stefanus Pienaar from Gobabis and South African Christo Human from Reivilo, with his horse Rakib Marco, winners of the Fauresmith 2010 event, were the frontrunners.

Sameul with Aktar, who won the Namibian Independence



Schalk Fourie & Shakira



Julius Ackermann & Skim

Ride over 120 km in 2010, led the field after the first loop of 40 km, but Christo broke down Sameul's four-minute lead after 70 km and came in three seconds faster after the second loop. Sameul and Aktar fought back to retake the lead on the third loop and maintained this lead all the way to the finish line to take the honours in a time of 05:23:06 with an average speed of 22.56 km/h! Aktar won the Best Conditioned horse

South Africa International Challenge - Nylstroom 7 April 2011 - FEI results					
Position	Rider	Horse	Time	Actual speed	Corrected speed
121,47 km FEI Heavy weights					
1	George Wessels	Simmenau Jellica	5:49:12	20,88	27,58
2	Rassie Erasmus	Lamorte	6:11:48	19,61	26,31
3	Trevor Rous	Hanham Missile	6:23:22	19,02	25,72
4	Fanus Muller	Zameehl * Best Conditioned Horse	6:33:46	18,51	25,21
5	Nickie Marais	Atashi Shitan	6:39:38	18,24	24,94
121,47 km FEI Seniors					
1	Sameul Afrikaner	Aktar * Best Conditioned Horse & Best of the Best Conditioned overall	5:23:06	22,56	29,26
2	Christo Human	Rakib Marco	5:27:59	22,23	28,93
3	Stefanus Pienaar	Enduro Flieka	5:28:00	22,23	28,93
4	Corne Fick	Izzat	5:38:03	21,56	28,26
5	Lanel van Nieuwenhuizen	Iktara Shameen	5:44:32	21,16	27,86
121,47 km FEI No weight riders					
1	Danjella Himmel	Twin * Best Conditioned Horse	5:53:28	20,62	27,32
2	Louise Jordaan	Kromar Shar-Yanica	6:00:43	20,21	26,91
3	Cherne' de Meyer	Antiqua	6:06:58	19,87	26,57
4	Franzi Marais	Sekelbos Anastasia	6:06:58	19,87	26,57
5	Martell Dormehl	Romeo	6:08:06	19,80	26,50
121,47 km FEI Young riders					
1	Reze Barnard	Starla	5:30:24	22,06	28,76
2	Winel Barnard	Lucky	5:31:00	22,02	28,72
3	Elaine van der Merwe	Esmak Shabier	5:31:01	22,02	28,72
4	Alice Krenze	Hidalgo	5:45:37	21,09	27,79
5	Mama van der Merwe	Deo-Gratias Nazira	5:46:50	21,02	27,72

A fierce battle between Christo Human and Rakib Marco for the 2nd place in the 120 FEI category with Stefanus Pienaar and Enduro Flieka in third.



George Wessels & Simmenau Jellica

award in the FEI senior competition as well as the precious Best of the Best Conditioned award over all four weight categories. To top it all, Aktar and Sameul set up the fastest time for the day, which included ALL competitors in ALL categories!

Stefanus and his horse Enduro Flieka also set their sights on Christo and Rakib Marco to earn a second place in the race. Stefanus and Flieka rode the last and final 20 km in a time of 38:26 with an average speed of 31.96 km/h to catch up with Christo and Rakib and it turned into a flat-out race to the finish line. Only a split second separated these horses with Christo in second place with a time of 05:27:59 and Stefanus in third place in a time of 05:28:00.

With four international teams – SA, Namibia, Botswana and Argentina – who all hoped to earn a place on the podium, this league match was of the highest standards. Normally the most competitive rides are determined between SA and Namibia as both have a large pool of competitive riders and horses to choose from, while Botswana only has a few affiliated riders and horses. The Argentinean team were in a weak position from the start, as they had to rely on unknown horses, leased from SA endurance riders, which they were introduced to only three days before the competition.

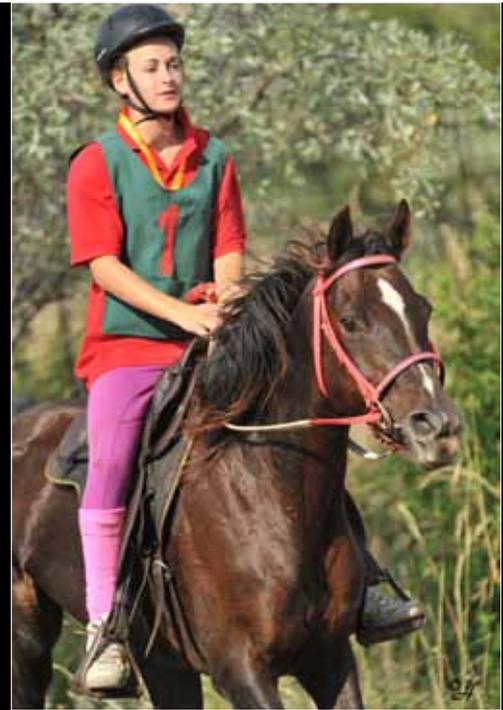
The team competition ruled that four of the six nominated riders from each team had to complete the 120 km course successfully, of which the best four riders' times would be counted to determine the winning team. But, what a surprise in the senior international competition; with SA, Namibian and



Sameul Afrikaner & Aktar



Danjella Himmel & Twin



Reze Barnard & Starla

Botswana teams who were unable to produce enough finishers due to numerous eliminations, the Argentinean team got the honours to win the international senior team competition. The Argentineans' slogan was "slow and steady wins the race" and they dearly deserved this honour as they nurtured their leased horses to the best of their abilities.

All riders and horses of the six-member Argentinean senior

team finished the race successfully within the following positions: Constanza Julianes and Baha Batula in 19th position in a time of 06:16:47, Augustin Vita with Fabrako Darius came 40th in a time of 07:17:25, Roxana Tagliaferro with Arkab Silverit finished 42th with a time of 07:19:37, Franco Cuzzani and Al Gamila Roulet were 50th in a time of 08:47:12, Joaquin Sanchez Charro was 51st with Arkab Asar in a time of 08:50:07 and to top it all, Susana Lima De Nikodem with Khazar in 53rd place in a time of 09:00:30. Taking into account that this category delivered the most eliminations, as well as the fact that it wasn't the riders' own horses, makes this a remarkable achievement indeed!

In the provincial competition, Northern Cape earned the first place with Eastern Cape second and M&G Union in third.

This year's International Challenge proved to be spectacular – the presentation of the event, the good standard of all competitive horses, the riders' good sportsmanship as well as the universal feeling of camaraderie and the common feelings we share towards our dear, beloved horses!

A final word of appreciation from the president of the Northern Union, Niel Kirstein: "A sincere acknowledgement to all competitors, supporters and spectators! The ride turned out to be very successful due to everyone's good spirits and co-operation. Without loyal people, this ride wouldn't be possible; to each and everyone who made a contribution in any way, it is highly appreciated. The veterinarians and officials delivered excellent service during the ride. Last, but not least, a big thank you to all our sponsors – each and every contribution is greatly appreciated!"





JS Photography

Judie Wiese from Wiejandrie Stud, Witvlei, Namibia with their winning horse, Aktar. Aktar and Sameul Afrikaner won the senior 120 km FEI competition. Aktar won the Best Conditioned Horse award in this category as well as Best of the Best Conditioned Horses, overall. Sameul and Aktar set up the fastest time for the day with an average speed of 22,56 km/h.

Song specially composed by singer, Franna Benadé, for the SAIC event



YOU WILL CARRY ME HOME

You make me fly like the wind
 You make me shine
 You make me soar like an eagle
 You make me dance in the rain
 I hear your cry when you call
 I know your heart
 I guide your reigns not to fall
 I care for you

You are my friend
 My inspiration
 You will be there till the end
 You are my friend
 My inspiration
 You will carry me home

In stormy weather you are there
 to guide me
 and when we were lost you found
 the way

* All music and songs written, performed and recorded by Franna Benadé

Team Placings:

HEAVY WEIGHT	INTERNATIONAL	No Placings
	PROVINCIAL	1. North West Union
SENIOR	INTERNATIONAL	1. Argentina
	PROVINCIAL	1. Northern Cape
		2. Eastern Cape
		3. M&G Union
		4. Kwa-Zulu Natal
LIGHT WEIGHT	INTERNATIONAL	1. Erasa
	PROVINCIAL	2. Namibia
		1. Northern Union
		2. M&G Union
YOUNG RIDERS	INTERNATIONAL	1. South Africa
		2. South Africa Development Team
		3. Namibia
	PROVINCIAL	1. North West Development
		2. North West
		3. Eastern Cape
		4. Northern Cape
		5. Free State
		6. M&G Union



All the S.A. National and ERASA teams with their respective Team Managers.



Botswana's senior team from left to right: Ntate Kalopa, Anrika van den Heever, Kewagamang Lodi, Bob Moaloosi and Ludi Scheffer (Team Manager).



Argentinean riders who participated at the SAIC of which their senior team won the international senior competition. Manuel Sanchez Charro (young rider), Constanza Julianes, Susana Lima De Nikodem (rider and Chef d'equipe), Roxana Tagliaferro, Joaquin Sanchez Charro, Franco Cuzzani and Augustin Vita.