

Team Toyota ready for Absa Cape Epic start line

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Leading vehicle manufacturer, Toyota South Africa is proud to once again be the official vehicle supplier of the 2010 ABSA Cape Epic, one of the toughest stage races in the world for mountain bikers. The warm up ride for this year's event, will be taking place tomorrow (19 March 2010) with the Freedom Ride on Robben Island. Team Toyota members that will participate include Andrew Kirby, Michael Mol and Shaun Bartlett.



Shaun Bartlett

This year will see the biggest Toyota Team to date, with a 10-member team competing in the Epic from 21 to 28 March 2010 in the Western Cape. Toyota presence will further be enhanced by an estimated 80 Cycle Lab Toyota SuperCycling Club riders taking on this epic challenge.

Now in its fourth year of competing, the Toyota Team is a well oiled machine, consisting of Amabubesi riders Danie Smit and partner Kobie Pruis, now riding in their fifth consecutive Epic. Fellow Toyota employee John Thomson will be competing for the third time, this year with new partner David Labuschagne of Cycle Lab.

Adding further excitement to the team is previous Absa Cape Epic rider Jeremy Thomson (ex-Sharks rugby professional), and first-time rider Michael Mol (*Top Billing* presenter and Sportron CEO) and Shaun Bartlett (ex-Bafana Bafana striker). Thomson and Mol will make up one team, whilst Bartlett and trainer Bruce Dies will make up the other. Completing Team Toyota is Toyota SA Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing, Andrew Kirby, who will be joined by his wife, Cindi.



Michael Mol

“What is so fantastic about this race is the teamwork that is required in order to succeed. As a global brand we have relied on thousands of people from all over the world to make us what we are today, and that is what we know as teamwork. I am thoroughly looking forward to competing in this grueling race and I have no doubt that our celebrity riders, Shaun, Jeremy and Michael will enjoy themselves as much as I will,” said

Kirby.

When asked about the vehicle sponsorship, Mr Kirby had this to say: "I cannot wait to see our vehicles tested out there on the tricky terrains. The synergy between this race and our vehicles is huge - our Fortun is a vehicle that can tackle almost anything that nature throws at it and I am confident that both the race officials as well as media will thoroughly enjoy taking on the course in our cars."

Looking forward to the 8-day challenge, celebrity rider, Shaun Bartlett said: "I am a very inexperienced cyclist, so what lies ahead can be rather daunting! Having said that, I have trained hard and smart, and am looking forward to the race and will embrace the challenge 100%. My goal is to finish the race, no matter what."

Toyota's partnership with Cycle Lab, has seen the top veteran cyclist, Andrew McLean join the Toyota team and guide the celebrities for this magnificent race. A donation will be made to the Toyota SuperCycling Academy on behalf of the two celebrity teams of R100 per km for every one of the 722km completed in the race.

Team Toyota:

Team 1: Danie Smit & Kobie Pruis

Team 2: John Thomson & David Labuschagne

Team 3: Andrew Kirby & Cindi Kirby

Team 4: Michael Mol & Jeremy Thomson

Team 5: Shaun Bartlett & Bruce Diesel

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