

## Stott and Mbanjwa take Landrover 50 Miler

Contributed by Chester Foster  
 Tuesday, 08 December 2009  
 Last Updated Tuesday, 08 December 2009

There were few surprises in the final standings at the Landrover 50 Miler over the weekend with Ant Stott and Michael Mbanjwa comfortably winning the race overall and Abbey Miedema and Robyn Kime doing the same in the women's category. However, at the end of the first day on Saturday both categories were much tighter with the prospect of great racing on Sunday. Stott and Mbanjwa won the day but with only a slender 43 seconds on second placed Andrew Birkett and Jason Graham. On Day two however, Stott and Mbanjwa proved too strong and Birkett and Graham settled for a risk free run down the rapid littered Umgeni below Inanda Dam for a safe second place. Gauteng paddlers Piers Cruikshanks and Jacques Theron were 8 minutes off the pace in third place at the end of Day 1 with a hungry pack of new and younger combinations breathing down their necks, but they managed to hang onto their third spot and extend their lead from 16 seconds to over 2minutes on Day 2.

In the women's race it was even closer as Hillary Pitchford and Jen Hodson came into the last rapid together with Miedema and Kime after racing together for most of the day. Here there was an altercation with a men's boat also trying to squeeze through the same set of rocks and Miedema and Kime were squeezed out of the channel coming in second at the finish line 50metres further down the river. Pitchford and Hodson felt this was an unfair situation and very sportingly requested the organisers to give both boats the same Day 1 time and start both boats together the next day. This was done and Miedema and Kime proved their superiority with a win of just over 2 minutes at Blue Lagoon on Sunday. As expected, Abby Adie and Lindi-May Harmsen took the third place in the women's race. They had a problem with a broken paddle shortly after the start on the first day but on Day 2 their time was only 18seconds slower than Pitchford and Hodson.

There was plenty of drama and excitement in the boys race where Dusi 2009 first and second places, Kwanda Mhlophe and Lance Kime teamed up for what looked like an invincible team. But on Day 1 they received an unexpectedly strong challenge from the crew of Gavin Shuter from Gauteng and Ivan Kruger from Cape Town and only managed to hold them off by 16seconds. Disaster struck however on Day 2 when Shuter twisted his leg on the portage over the Inanda Dam wall making the run down to Blue Lagoon slow and painful. They did manage to hold onto their second place overall, despite the third placed boat of U16's Donovan Wewege and Andrew Adie taking 11minutes of them on Day 2. Mhlophe and Kime had a trouble free Day 2 and pulled up into fourth place overall, the best performance by a junior K2 crew in the history of the race. Both boys paddle for St Charles College.

Jenna Starr and Lindsay Davis won the girls race, 5th overall among the women, with Brittany Petersen and Tamika Haw six minutes behind in second place. Caitlin Millar and Hazel Little were distant third. Apart from Lindsay Davis from Wykeham Collegiate, all the girls in these top three boats came from Epworth in Pietermaritzburg. A total of 810 paddlers entered for the two day classic, the biggest entry in several years.

The weather was cloudy and cool with drizzle for the first day from Mission rapid to Marianni Foley Causeway with the Umsindusi and Umgeni rivers flowing at around 14 cumecs thanks to a release of water from Henley Dam courtesy of Umgeni Water. On Sunday the sun put in an appearance for the first time in several day for a perfect, warm summer's day. The Umgeni below Inanda was flowing at 16cumecs again thanks to Umgeni Water. Umzinyathi Canoe Club, sponsors Landrover and race co-ordinator Chester Foster, were delighted with the outcome and it was certainly one of the best and smoothest 50 Milers ever.

Results Ant Stott and Michael Mbanjwa NAT-SOW 4:20:21, Andrew Birkett and Jason Graham UKN-NGW 4:28:59, Piers Cruikshanks and Jacques Theron DAB 4:36:02, Lance Kime and Kwanda Mhlophe(U18) NAT/STC-LEM/STC 4:38:16, Michael Patrick and Chris Birkett(U21) RHO-UKN 4:39:27. Women Abbey Miedema and Robyn Kime INT-US 4:54:56, Hillary Pitchford and Jen Hodson NAT-DAB 4:56:29 Abby Adie and Lindi-May Harmsen NAT-MIL 5:11:03. Boys Lance Kime and Kwanda Mhlophe NAT/STC-LEM/STC 4:38:16, Gavin Shuter and Ivan Kruger DAB-MIL 4:59:20, Donovan Wewege and Andrew Adie(U16) MAR-KEA 5:01:43. Girls Lindsay Davis and Jenna Starr TWC-NAT/EPW 5:38:05, Tamika Haw and Brittany Petersen EPW 5:44:08, Caitlin Millar and Hazel Little EPW 6:39:49.

1st Mixed Double Sandra Eardley and David Ngcobo VIC 5:36:13.

1st SV Mike Harris and Brandon Collyer VIC 4:46:59.

1st V Eric Hildebrandt and James Tutton KIN 4:57:57 &ndash; women, Debbie Lewis and Cavill Cordes KIN-UMZ 6:33:13

1st SM Glen Hilliar and Mike de Villiers KIN-NAT 4:53:07

1st M Peter Duncan and Nigel Briggs STE-NAT 5:24:48&ndash; women, Lorna Holmes and Kim Wessels UMZ 8:57:33

1st SGM Graeme Pope-Ellis and Phillip van Niekerk 5:10:57

1st GM Peter Unite and Grefried Nebe MIL 6:00:09.1st K1 Shaun Biggs CAN 5:06:22. Report BackWe are really interested in feedback for next year on all aspects so we can improve: Did you get sick from the water &ndash; E coli levels Please report incident in the valley (Brief area description) What did you like about the race? If you didn&rsquo;t receive your T shirt (Size please + address)

Thanks to all paddlers for a great race, of over 850 paddlers.

Regards,

Chester Foster

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