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PRESS RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN SIDECAR SPEEDWAY TITLE IN NEWCASTLE

Five of Mildura's regular and top Sidecar Speedway teams will be in Newcastle this Easter weekend to try and take Australian Championship glory from a world class field which has nominated for the Title meetings. Two teams from Broken Hill and three teams from Mildura will travel to Newcastle to contest the action for the 2010 Title.

Top Victorian team of Byren Gates and Mick O'Loughlin are seeded riders directly into the Championship final on the Sunday night whereas the other Mildura challengers will be the team of Warren Monson and Deven Gates, and Andrew O'Rourke and Jason Mayes, who will need to finish in the top ten teams in the Saturday night Qualifying meeting to get another ride in the final the following night.

The Gates / O'Loughlin combination has had a wonderful season so far, being the best local crew in a very tight bunch of Mildura based teams, but the Monson / Gates and Howse / Commons team can never be under-estimated. Monson probably has the most powerful machine going around and will take some scalps if he has a track which allows him the transfer that horsepower into drive and speed on the track.

The O'Rourke / Mayes team are the great improvers of the last season locally and they have been taking some away rides to get experience ready for this Title foray.

Broken Hill is well represented by Ricky Howse and Adam Commons, who will defend their bronze medal position from last year and the sparkling new combination of Rick Stephens and Dean Hobbs, who are probably the biggest improvers in Australian Sidecar speedway today. A little bit of luck to either of these teams, who both need to go through the Qualifier, could see them place well on the big night as well. The Broken Hill teams are ready to race as they have been competing well at their home meetings, especially at the massive St. Pats weekend just two weeks ago.

The Newcastle Showgrounds circuit is long and quite wide, which should suit the style of Monson, who is always looking for grip to gather his speed. The track has a good tight line too, which will be exploited well by the Gates and O'Loughlin pair as they seem to be able to ride according to any conditions. O'Rourke, Howse and Stephens should be comfortable in Newcastle and will expect to make it into the final on Easter Sunday night.

These fellows will be up against the very best Sidecar exponents in the world in a field which has, for the first time the World Champion in the field, even though Mick Headland will ride with his youngest son Jess in the chair instead of his World Championship winning passenger, Paul Waters, who was badly injured in a race incident in New Zealand back in January.

Favouritism for the 2010 Australian Championship should be shared between defending Champs, Mark Mitchell and Tom Golding and local and five times Champion, Darrin Treloar and Justin Plaisted as well as the World Champ, Mick and Jess Headland.

Former Speedway sidecar Gold Cup winners, Scott Christopher and Trent Koppe, from FNQ, will be like Monson and Gates, trying to make it through the Qualifier as they had some bad luck in the Queensland Title, which they lost to Brodie Cohen and Geoff Ferguson. The Christopher / Koppe team is well healed and should give a good account of themselves as world class competition has been a strength for them.

Former Aussie Champ, Russell Mitchell, with the tiny Tina Karen along side will be out to set the record straight from a Western Australian perspective. Tina won an Australian Title as passenger with Mark Drew in Broken Hill way back in 1994, so she brings experience to the event. Mitchell is the man who really revolutionised the geometry of the modern Speedway Sidecar machines more than 25 years ago, when he refined the format of the "kneeling" type and purpose built frame for the three wheelers.

Grant Bond and Glenn Cox are another team who will have to qualify but should achieve that goal and then would be a threat for the final as well, as will the unluckiest riders around for the last three years in SA pair, of Mark Plaisted and Sam Harrison. These two were the only unbeaten riders at the World Gold Cup in Adelaide back in 2007 and since that time have suffered the most engine blows of any team around. A change in luck could see this team breeze through the Qualifying meeting and then be a chance for a podium on the Sunday night in the major event.

Veterans, Gary Moon and Mick Ing, from Queensland should be in with a shot as well, even though it is nearly two decades since Moon won his only Australian Championship.

Sixteen teams will contest the Qualifying meeting at the Newcastle Showgrounds on the Saturday night, with the top ten from that meeting joining the Title defending and State Champions to make the final field of sixteen on Title night, Easter Sunday.

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