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## PRESS RELEASE

### 34<sup>th</sup> SIDECAR SPECTACULAR – MASSIVE FIELD

A capacity field will contest the 34<sup>th</sup> running of the North West Funerals - Mildura Sidecar Spectacular at Mildura's Olympic Park, on Saturday night.

The massive eighteen team contest will be run with the winners to receive the Keith "Curley" Carmes Trophy, a prestigious award for the longest running, non -Title speedway meeting in the country.

Past Australian Champions, Glenn O'Brien, from Perth and Queenslanders, Gary Moon and Scott Christopher / Trent Koppe are all engaged as well as State Champions in Byren Gates, Jason Bradshaw and current Victorian Champions, Warren Monson / Deven Gates, who will all use the Olympic Park meeting as their primary hit out before the Australian Championship to be held in just two weeks time.

All States are present in the entry list, which represents one of the strongest fields put together for a Sidecar Spectacular in many years. Mildura Club officials had difficulty in making the final selection and format, given that the field was so even.

Pressure will be on all eighteen teams right from the outset as in each set of nine teams, only the top four will race off for a position in the North West Funerals Final, where only two teams from each division will make it into the main event.

Last week's Sidecar Shootout was the precursor for this week's Spectacular, as the field is considerably stronger, especially with the in – form, Glenn O'Brien making a welcome return to Mildura by popular demand. O'Brien has resumed his Sidecar career after a few years of lay off. The spark which has re-ignited O'Brien's passion is possibly the chance to now win a World Championship in Sidecar Speedway which was only imagined when O'Brien retired. O'Brien is in charge of a very professional outfit, with the team travelling from WA to Adelaide and Mildura each week prior to the Australian Title meeting, to get the track craft back on edge, with a hope to add another Australian Title to his already full mantle.

Moon too, is in great form and like O'Brien, he covers massive distance to play his sport. Moon was one of the first riders to ever go to England. He took Sidecar speedway to the UK back in the 1990's, just after he won his Australian Championship.

Fellow banana benders, Scott Christopher ./ Trent Koppe, have also been long term travelers, but living in Townsville and Cairns, that is part of the accepted fate of living so far north. They are making a hefty start to their 2011 Australian Championship assault by riding into the Mildura Spectacular as their first key meeting for a little while.

One should never discount the very fast, Warren Monson / Deven Gates. Monson has been playing with a new machinery concept, which sees him riding a brutish Suzuki machine, altered by crankshaft design, to have his four cylinder engine operate as a massive compression, "twin"

cylinder machine. Monson has learned well from his vocation as mechanic for Team Suzuki in Australian Superbike racing, where he has spannered for Shawn Giles and this year for Mildura's Josh Waters team mate, Troy Herfoss. This inside knowledge has made many sidecar stalwarts sit up and take plenty of notice of the usually quiet, except for when he is on the race track – Monson.

Byren Gates / Mick O'Loughlin have been in good recent form, taking second place in each of the Victorian and NSW Titles for this year and Byro having a great night last week when he, with brother Deven, took second place behind Mark Mitchell / Tom Golding in the Shootout final. Jason Bradshaw / Steven Behsmann and Andrew O'Rourke / Jason Mayes are not without chances nor is Clint Mayes / Andrew Summerhayes, after a good third place last week in strong company. The Headland brothers, Trent and Jess have taken some significant scalps, including that of Trent's father-in – law, Glenn O'Brien at their most recent outing at Gillman.

Our Kiwi visitors, Andrew Buchanan / Phillipa Burns showed good skills last week, only to have their chances curtailed by mechanical problems once they had been tipped over in a contest. They have shown to be the best team to come to Mildura from the land of the Long White Cloud and have been like sponges soaking up information and track advice from the local riders in the Pits last weekend. It is pleasing to see folk who are prepared to travel to better themselves and "Spud" and Phillipa make no secret that they are here to learn and take back skills and set up information to their homeland.

Another team who will be very interesting to watch are the teenage Queenslanders, Dylan Blain / Aaron Stewart, who are sure footed and smooth on their machine. Blain, while now resident of Townsville has strong connections to Mildura as his grandfather, John Blain is a former Mayor of Mildura City. The Blain and Stewart families travel countless miles in their search for improvement. It is predicted that they are future Australian Champions and their present skills demonstrate that it may well be true. The youngsters have ridden at Gillman already this season, getting in some valuable practice ready for the Nationals later this month.

Munro / Yetman, Holmes / Hancock, Milner / Gates and the Cohrs brothers, Simon and Mark, are more local teams who will take good points off good riders, such is the nature of the racing format. Broken Hill's Ricky Stephens / Dean Hobbs and last week's semi finalist, Mark Radford / Matt Putkins, are also not without their chances. Patterson / Gawne are a new combination although, they did podium at the Victorian Title at Broadford a few weeks ago.

Great support will again be provided by a keen group of Solo riders, who entertained us well last week. SA rider Rob Medson, will resume his battle with Brenton Barnfield and last week's first timer Sean Peterson, who made a splendid debut taking a win and a second place in his first night of competition, with local rider Chris Ferguson making a come back to the track after some time away.

Classic Sidecars will again see themselves as the feature event on the program. This collection of "gentlemen" enjoy their riding to the full, with their satisfaction only being exceeded by their enthusiasm for riding their older machinery and mixing good racing with lots of fun.

Gates will open at 5:00pm, with Senior Practice set to start at 600pm. A junior meeting will follow, although it will be much reduced as many riders will be in Gippsland for a junior meeting there. The North West Funerals - Sidecar Spectacular will get under way at 7:30 sharp, with patrons being reminded that there must be No BYO by law. Olympic Park has a full catering service with great food and hot and cold drinks.

9<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
Brendon Gledhill  
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For further information or interview, please contact,  
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