

Don River awaits star-studded field

Held along the riverbed of the Don River in Bowen, on the beautiful North Queensland coastline, this weekends highly anticipated Comiskey Mining Services Don River Dash, Round 6 of the ARB Mickey Thompson Tyres QLD Off Road Championship is ready to launch, with an incredible 99 cars, and 260 bike entries set for battle.



Quickly becoming the bucket list event for every off roader across the country; the Don River Dash hosted by the Burdekin Offroaders Inc presents a combination of perfect weather, sublime track conditions and an idyllic location holding the Queensland event in good stead for many years to come!

Headlined by two time defending champion and one of North Queensland's favourite sons Talbot Cox #16, the events fourth edition is set to showcase some of Australia's biggest names including recent Loveday 400 victor Aaron Haby #57 in his Element Prodigy, 2020 runner up and club president Michael Marson #32 in the teams Racer, multiple time QLD champion Clayton Chapman #15, former Australian champion Hayden Bentley #818, plus trophy truck hard chargers Brad Gallard #454 and 2019 King of the River Billy Geddes #441 who are all primed for a major Don River assault.



New Queensland front runner Brice Derrick #696s will head the championship contenders after a strong Goondiwindi campaign, the Class 6s hard charger will enter Don River with a 20 point advantage over Stuart Chapman #17 in 2nd who's had a breakthrough season, Clayton Chapman #15 in 3rd, plus Darren Brandon #689 and James Mogford #6195 who are both well placed.

The Unlimited Class is once again stacked with talent and class, joining Cox, Marson, Haby, and the Chapman brothers in the Don River will be South Australian Roydn Bailey #52, plus North Queensland Kent Battle #31 in their respective Elements Prodigy's, last years 3rd place outright recipient Craig Krog #23 another to watch, likewise Drew Callander #99, Cooper Western #61 who was 5th outright last year and Sydney's Michael Fittler #905.

Tony Fehlhaber #138 is a genuine outright podium shot in the teams Chenoweth, and will spearhead the Class 1 contingent. Others to keep a watch on include young gun Trent Callander #127, Darren Angel #160, local campaigner Chris Colborne #169 who has impressively finished all three DRD in the top 10, Brett Baker #124, club vice president Chris Land #180 and current QLD Class 1 leader Rowan Clarke #128.

Class 10 QLD championship leader Steven Orr #1051 will lead the class into battle at Bowen, young Brayden Mifsud #1026 who had a strong 8th outright finish at Goondiwindi will be amongst the challengers, likewise Christian Montesalvo #1088, Sam Bentley #1018 and club member Daniel MacDonald #1052 who is making his Don River debut.



Ryan Jones #1111 will look to back up his last start win with another strong showing in the teams 7 litre Chev powered Class 11 Tatum, though is expected to face stiff competition from Razorback challenger James Sant #1144, and the Can Am of Keith Daley #1105.

Joining Gallard and Geddes in the Class 4 line up is last year's DRD runner up Justin Montesalvo #484 in his GET Performance TT, QLD championship front runner Steven Kildey #412, local Steven Pon Vein #422, Brett Comiskey #434 who is having an incredibly consistent 2022 season, Michael Denham #433 in his Micklefab Raptor, along with Ivan Robertson #471 who will make the trip up from Mildura, and Dave Muir #448 having his first run in the teams newly acquired Geiser Bros TT.



Led by last year's champion Richard Tassin #691, this year's Class 6 title fight will be hotly contested. QLD class championship leader Christian Rich #619 is having a breakthrough campaign and will be a force, likewise 16 year old Kye Camilleri #666 who claimed a maiden outright victory at Moranbah in July, James Mogford #6195 who took the class win at Goondiwindi, Justin Rider #627, local earthmoving sponsor Dale McDonnell #608, and Jared Vanderhor #632 are amongst the others to watch.

Brice Derrick #696s not only leads the QLD championship outright, he always holds a slender buffer in Class 6s over Darren Brandon #689s and son Luke #690s in their Drells Run Racing Polaris, whilst Tony Patterson 675s, current QLD ladies leader Leila Chapman #616s and defending DRD champion Tammy Daley #648s are set to be in the mix.

Sam Hancock #6671 will look to defend her 2021 DRD Class 66 title in the teams Polaris, though will need to overcome Katelyn Long #6626 and Nigel Pearce #6608. The quest for Class 5 honours will be a must watch, with Michael Ranson #507 and last year's champion Tyler Youman #527 set to battle it out once again in 2022. Likewise in Class 7, with Jason Lavis #727, Hank Parker #798 and Darlene Blake #724 ready to duel it out.

Chris Wieden #833 will seek to defend his Class 8 title at the 2022 DRD, with his biggest challenger expected to be Hayden Bentley #818, Luke Peterson #878, and John Alfred #819 are also set to pose a threat.

The Queensland Off Road Racing Championship would like to thank their major naming right sponsors ARB and Mickey Thompson Tyres for continuing their strong partnership into 2022, whilst expressing full gratitude towards the other championship sponsors, including Fraser Coast Sand & Gravel, Lucas Papaw Remedies, North Lakes Best Western Hotel, Chapmans Performance Dyno Tuning, Comiskey Mining Services and Method Race Wheels Australia.



With a warm welcoming again received by the Bowen and surrounding Whitsunday communities, the Don River event will see the competitors head approximately 25km upstream in the dry riverbed to the turnaround point, before returning back on the other side. Three laps will make up Saturday's first section in reverse grid before competitors complete the same assignment on the Sunday, to ultimately decide the 2022 King of the River.

The Burdekin Offroaders Inc would like to sincerely thank their Don River Dash Platinum sponsor - Comiskey Mining Services, Gold sponsors - Whitsunday Ag Services, Patriot Campers, Mickey Thompson, Mercedes Benz, McDonnell Earthmoving, Rocks Farming Company and Ergon along with the Silver sponsors - Whitsunday Regional Council, Tropic, RGM, Padmans, Heavy Logistics & Mechanical, Dynamic Wheels, Burdekin Motorcycles and Abbot Point, plus many more Bronze, Checkpoint and Supporter sponsors who have made the 2022 DRD possible.

If you are in the Whitsundays Region this weekend get yourself to the Don River in Bowen, with the action kick-starting from 8.30am both Saturday and Sunday morning. For more info check out the Burdekin Offroaders Inc and Don River Dash Facebook pages, plus the new event website at www.donriverdash.com.au!

Image credit: Terry Hill Photography