



NAMIBIA MOTOR SPORT FEDERATION NEWSLETTER

Zooming into the Future

Despite covid-19 physically keeping us away from each other, it has brought us closer together thanks to social media platforms. The introduction of Zoom has taken the world of communication to a whole new level.

Recently the NMSF Commission held its first meeting via Zoom and commission members who usually travel from Walvis Bay, Tsumeb and Gobabis to attend these monthly meetings in Windhoek could attend the meeting from the comfort of their home.

The FIA recently made history when it hosted the World Sports eConference via Zoom over 4 days. This conference was scheduled to take place in Bangkok Thailand but was cancelled due to Covid-19. The conference was attended by 176 federations comprising over 900 delegates.

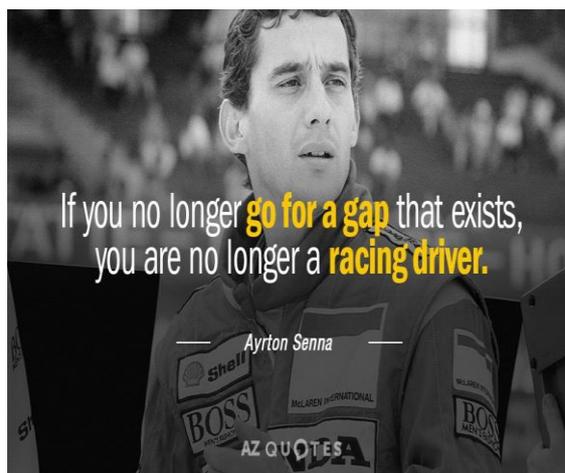
Whilst Zoom might not entirely kill off meetings as we knew it before Covid-19, it sure has changed the way meetings will be held in the future.



A recent Council meeting held via Zoom

Covid-19

Covid-19 is going to be with us for a while and everyone will have to adapt to the new normal of masks, temperature testing, tracking, and tracing, sanitising, and social distancing. Whilst this is challenging enough for everyone, the challenges the federation faces to resume motorsport safely are even greater as we are in uncharted territory and the correct solutions must be found. The NMSF is in constant consultation with the FIA and the Namibia Sports Commission to ensure that motorsport in Namibia returns safely. This is going to be a lengthy process and will require a lot of patience and support from everyone.





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Digital Motorsport

At the recent FIA eConference, digital motorsport was discussed at great length. In 2019 the FIA awarded a world championship title to the winner of the GT Championship. This is only the beginning as the FIA is in consultation with other game manufacturers to include Touring Cars, Endurance racing, Formula E and Rallying.

The Rally Star program which will be launched before the end of 2020 to find future rally champions will use simulators as the first step of the process to find new talent. The session had drivers as guest speakers who successfully made the transition from gaming simulators into real Touring Cars and Endurance Racing.

One of the key points of discussion was how easy and cost effective it is to go racing and whilst it is not 100 percent the real deal, one need look no further than the Virtual Formula 1, Le Mans 24 Hours and Indy Car races which took place with during lockdown with some of the biggest names in motorsport competing.

The recent Virtual Le Mans 24 Hour Endurance race had 200 drivers from around the world competing in 80 cars. The organiser received 10 000 entries and had a tough time choosing drivers for the race. Once again, who do we have to thank, Covid-19.





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NEWSLETTER

Motocross and Enduro

When one thinks of the Namibia Motorsport Federation it is natural to associate the federation only with motor cars. Most people in Namibia are not aware that the NMSF represents car and motorcycle competitions.

The NMSF is affiliated to two world governing bodies namely the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) representing all types of motorsport relating to cars and the Fédération Internationale Motorcycliste (FIM) representing motorcycle related motorsport.

As an affiliate to FIM, the NMSF receives numerous benefits in the form of financial grants, subsidized international competition licenses and opportunities to attend seminars for the training of officials to the latest International standards. In addition to this, Namibia is allocated 3 starting slots by virtue of affiliation for Namibian competitors competing at International Motocross events without having to qualify for the slot.

The most common type of two- and four-wheel motorcycle events held in Namibia are Motocross, Enduro and Off-road. Unfortunately, superbike racing is not catered for as the Tony Rust racetrack, the only road circuit in Namibia, does not have a safety grading for motorcycles. Because of this, a large number of superbike competitors regularly contest the Namibia National Drag Championship.



Motorcycle racing in any form is not for the faint hearted, and despite this, it is extremely popular because it is a cost-effective form of motorsport compared to motorsport with cars. It is therefore not unusual to see over a hundred motorcycles competing on an Enduro event. After an absence of many years, in 2019 Motocross was awarded National Championship status which is testament to the high level of competition and has produced top competitors who have represented Namibia Internationally.

Like Go Kart racing, competitors can start racing from the tender age of 5 and it is amusing to see how determined the little ones are to race despite their age. Motocross has the largest contingent of female competitors compared to any other motorsport code in Namibia and when the gates drop, they do not hold back.

The NMSF Vice President for motorcycles is Andreas Brendel and he has had a busy three years. Besides being the NMSF representative at FIM, in 2019 he was elected as the FIM Africa Commission President for Enduro, Off-road and Baja. Andreas is also the organizer of Namibia's only International motorcycle event, the X Race.

Over the years the X Race has grown in stature and in 2017 and 2018, the event was FIM supported. In 2019, the event was awarded Continental status by FIM and competitors from 5 countries participated namely, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, and Kenya. Unfortunately, this momentum could not be sustained for 2020 due to the event being cancelled because of Covid-19.





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NMSF Karting Development Program

In mid-2016 when the new NMSF Executive Council was elected one of the Councils first tasks was to draw up a 5-year strategic plan to develop motorsport in Namibia.

A part of this plan was to make motorsport more accessible by decentralising it by taking the sport to more places around Namibia.

In 2017 at the African Motorsport Federations Congress held by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) in Nigeria, the FIA presented a development karting program specifically for the African Federations to assist them with development of motorsport. The idea was to provide federations with a tool for the development of grassroot motorsport.

The program was in the form of a Go Kart Slalom kit consisting of 2 rental type Go Karts, 2 Helmets, 2 Racing suits and 350 cones to set out various slalom courses. In addition to this, the FIA provided training for the officials and marshals on how to safely operate the kit.



FIA Development Kart →

At this conference, the NMSF President was successful in applying for and obtaining one of these kits for Namibia which was scheduled to be delivered in 2018. However, the excitement of obtaining the program was short lived as the FIA asked Namibia to relinquish the kit to Tanzania who had no karting or development program in place. The NMSF kindly obliged and a new kit was to be delivered to Namibia in 2019 but due to unforeseen delays, the kit only arrived in Namibia late January 2020.

The Officials training at the Tony Rust Racetrack and the program launch at the Grove Mall in Windhoek scheduled for mid-April 2020 had to be delayed due to Covid-19. All was not because with the use of Zoom, the FIA regional trainer could host an online training session with the NMSF and a group of marshals who will be assisting with the running of the program.

Namibia is fortunate as it is one of only 4 federations to obtain the kit at no cost and going forward, the kit will have to be purchased at a cost of around 400 000 Namibian Dollars.

Once the Covid-19 regulations are lifted, the NMSF will roll out the development program and will be taken to various centres around Namibia in the search of young talent and will be limited to scholars between the age of 7 and 18.

