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Mozambique the Shining Star of Round 4

Maputo, Mozambique — 25th July 2026

Round 4 of the Backdraft Racing Series at the Autódromo Internacional de Maputo delivered four hours of intense endurance racing, featuring countless lead changes and strategic battles throughout the field. When the checkered flag finally fell, championship leaders Mike McLoughlin and Rob Mordaunt claimed victory in the Backdraft Class, while Kishoor and Mikaeel Pitamber secured the overall race win.

A New Challenge for the Drivers

For most of the competitors, the event marked their first experience at the 3.7 km Mozambican circuit. The technical layout rewarded the experienced racers who adapted quickly, while others spent much of the race discovering the circuit's challenges and their own limits.

Local favourites Andre Bettencourt and Pedro Garcia claimed pole position during Friday qualifying, edging McLoughlin and Mordaunt by just 0.064 seconds. Multiple national champion Barend Pretorius and teammate Fikile Holomisa completed the top three.

Early Heartbreak for the Home Heroes

Bettencourt converted pole position into an early race lead and immediately demonstrated his pace. However, his hopes of a home victory were short-lived. After setting the fastest lap of all the Backdraft competitors, technical problems forced the local favourite to retire after just 41 laps.

Pit Strategy Creates Chaos

With three compulsory pit stops for every team, varying fuel and driver change strategies soon began to unfold. Just before the one-hour mark, a Full Course Yellow transformed the race.

Almost the entire field headed for the pits, creating an enormous queue as teams attempted to maximise the opportunity. Thanks to the compulsory five-minute minimum pit stop, every crew was able to complete refuelling without disadvantage, allowing the race to continue on equal terms.

Lanz and Di Matteo Take Control

Fabienne Lanz and Franco Di Matteo became the first serious challengers for victory. Lanz delivered a superb opening stint, setting consistently blistering lap times to move into the lead.

Much of the workload rested on Lanz's shoulders, as Di Matteo had already completed three sprint races earlier in the weekend in his V8 Supercar. Unfortunately, their challenge unravelled when an extended pit stop dropped them out of contention.



A Thrilling Three-Way Fight

From halfway, the race evolved into a fascinating three-way battle.

McLoughlin and Mordaunt (#72) found themselves under constant pressure from Richard van Heerde and Dan Hirsch (#42). Meanwhile, after Giacomo Chignoli completed a double stint, Steve Clark climbed aboard the third-placed entry and immediately became the fastest driver on circuit.

Thriving under the night conditions, Clark was consistently gaining nearly two seconds per lap on the leaders. While spectators focused on the battle between cars #72 and #42, Clark quietly closed the gap. His charge ended heartbreakingly during his final stint when a puncture forced an unscheduled pit stop. Despite the setback, the team still secured a well-deserved third-place finish.

The Winning Strategy

McLoughlin and Mordaunt's alternative driver strategy ultimately proved decisive.

Unlike most teams, both drivers completed double stints. Rob Mordaunt drove continuously from daylight into darkness, while Mike McLoughlin completed an uninterrupted night stint. Neither driver had to adapt to changing track conditions midway through a stint, allowing them to maintain exceptional consistency and secure victory ahead of the #42 machine.

Mikaeel Pitamber Shines

The standout performer of the evening was undoubtedly Mikaeel Pitamber.

The young driver's pace proved significantly quicker than that of his father, Kishoor. Whenever time or positions were lost, Mikaeel quickly recovered them during his stints. With just 20 minutes remaining, he reclaimed the overall race lead and guided the team to its second overall victory of the season.

Championship Picture

The victory further strengthened Mike McLoughlin's lead in the Backdraft Racing Series championship, while teammate Rob Mordaunt climbed into second place in the standings.

After securing his first major result of the season, Dan Hirsch made one of the biggest moves in the championship, climbing 17 positions to 17th overall.

Mozambique Leaves a Lasting Impression

Away from the racing, the weekend proved to be an overwhelming success.

Teams were unanimous in their praise for the outstanding 3.7 km Autódromo Internacional de Maputo, while the warm Mozambican hospitality and seamless organisation by the hosts earned widespread admiration. After nearly two months of planning and logistical preparation to transport the championship from South Africa to Mozambique, the event exceeded expectations both on and off the circuit.

Looking Ahead

The Backdraft Racing Series now turns its attention to Round 5, which will take place on 16 and 17 October at Redstar Raceway in Delmas, Mpumalanga.

About Backdraft Racing Series

The Backdraft Racing Series creates an opportunity for racers of all levels to compete, with a clear focus on lowering barriers to entry in motorsport. Built around the proven Backdraft Race Car platform and supported by the local Backdraft factory, the series offers a competitive yet accessible environment for drivers and teams.

In 2026, the series began operating as an independent championship. While Backdraft Race Cars remain central to the grid, the series is open to owners of any race car, creating a diverse and competitive field.

The championship consists of seven race events throughout the year, each featuring multiple sprint races and a headline endurance race. For both vehicle owners and Arrive & Drive competitors, Backdraft Racing offers a full-service, factory-supported race weekend solution designed to make participation as seamless as possible. This includes assistance with vehicle transport, technical support, race preparation, logistics and, for drivers without their own cars, a fully supported Arrive & Drive hire option.

Beyond the racing itself, Backdraft Racing provides a level of event support that is uncommon in South African motorsport, including full catering and hospitality for drivers and guests. Each event is also backed by extensive media coverage, with a dedicated media team and professional photographers capturing the action on and off the circuit.

Backdraft Racing further welcomes qualifying content creators who would like to experience and showcase the championship. Creators interested in attending an event or learning more about available opportunities are encouraged to get in touch.

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