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SA-US Double Victory Reignites the Redstar Title Battle

Delmas, South Africa — 18th October 2026

Richard van Heerde and Dan Hirsch put a difficult start to their season behind them with a decisive double success at Round 5 of the Backdraft Racing Series. The SA-US pairing won the Backdraft class in the four-hour endurance race at Redstar Raceway and added Index of Performance honours, bringing themselves firmly back into the championship fight.

Overall victory went to debutants Sam, Nathan and Damien Hammond. The family took pole position in their VW SupaCup Polo and converted it into a win, completing 103 laps in 4:00:06.148. Behind them, the battle among the Backdraft Cobras remained unsettled until the closing stages.

New faces and a new direction

Ten new competitors joined the field at Redstar, adding fresh interest to a series that continues to attract drivers from across South African motorsport. Although the Backdraft Cobras had raced at the circuit before, this was their first outing on its anti-clockwise layout. Familiar surroundings presented a different challenge, and Van Heerde and Hirsch were quick to show their pace.

Saturday morning qualifying put the Hammonds ahead of Kishoor and Mikaeel Pitamber in the Class A Cobra. Mike McLoughlin set the fastest Backdraft class time, with Johan Minnaar's Class A entry and Franco di Matteo next in the qualifying order.

Four hours of changing fortunes

The opening exchanges delivered an immediate fight for the overall lead between the Hammonds' SupaCup Polo and the Pitambers' Pink Panther Cobra. That contest ended early when a sheared gearbox main shaft forced Kishoor and Mikaeel into retirement. The Hammonds made the most of the opportunity, combining assured racecraft with efficient pit work to secure the overall win on their first appearance.

The Backdraft class produced its own succession of contenders. Multiple V8 Supercar champion Mackie Adlem and Rud Barnard set a fierce early pace, but contact with McLoughlin sent their car into the pits for emergency repairs. McLoughlin continued in the lead, although the encounter also took its toll on the car he shared with Rob Mordaunt, and the pair gradually lost ground.

Gavin Rooke and Philip Meyer then looked well placed to take control, but the final phase of the race brought another change in fortunes. A late yellow-flag period made pitstop timing crucial. Fikile Holomisa and Denver Branders were the only pairing not to stop under the yellows, costing them the opportunity to gain valuable positions.

Franco di Matteo and Julian Fameliaris had taken a measured approach early on as part of their strategy, bringing themselves into contention as the race unfolded. In the final sequence of stops, however, Van Heerde and Hirsch made their opportunity count. They secured the Backdraft class win with 102 laps in 4:00:50.332, finishing second overall.

McLoughlin and Mordaunt recovered to take second in class, 38.926 seconds behind SA-US, while Di Matteo and Fameliaris completed the Backdraft podium on 101 laps. SA-US also topped the Index of Performance classification at 92.600%, ahead of Shake 'n Bake and McLoughlin and Mordaunt's Backdraft Racing entry.

Another milestone for the Backdraft family

Among the notable entries was the Cobra shared by Terry Wilford, Wayne Spicer and Mimi Le Roux. At 20, Le Roux became the youngest female competitor to race a Backdraft Cobra in South Africa, adding another milestone to a weekend that welcomed new faces alongside established contenders.

Championship fight remains open

McLoughlin continues to lead the Backdraft class championship ahead of team-mate Mordaunt, but Van Heerde's victory has lifted him eight positions into the top three. In the overall standings, Kishoor Pitamber retains the lead ahead of McLoughlin and Mordaunt despite the Redstar retirement.

With two rounds remaining and two drop rounds still to be applied, both championships remain wide open. Redstar demonstrated how quickly the order can change when race pace, reliability and pit strategy all come into play.

Looking Ahead

The Backdraft Racing Series returns to Dezzi Raceway on 13 and 14 November for the penultimate round of the season and a three-hour endurance race. The championship then heads to Killarney International Raceway on 11 and 12 December for the six-hour finale.

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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Overall classification

Pos.	No.	Class	Competitor	Laps	Total time	Difference	Gap	Best lap
1	95	A	Dragon Energy	103	4:00:06.148	—	—	2:06.050
2	42	B	SA-US	102	4:00:50.332	1 lap	1 lap	2:11.186
3	72	B	Backdraft Racing	102	4:01:29.258	1 lap	38.926	2:10.847
4	31	B	Team di Matteo	101	4:01:26.502	2 laps	1 lap	2:11.096
5	131	B	Shake 'n Bake	100	4:01:25.510	3 laps	1 lap	2:13.809
6	94	B	Lanz/Spies	100	4:01:31.330	3 laps	5.820	2:11.942
7	11	B	Qhubani	100	4:02:14.654	3 laps	43.324	2:12.242
8	78	B	Wonderbread	99	4:01:14.691	4 laps	1 lap	2:10.269
9	127	B	Black Beauty	96	4:01:23.124	7 laps	3 laps	2:11.045
10	49	B	Wellnetix	90	4:01:08.010	13 laps	6 laps	2:11.358
11	952	C	ATS Motorsport	89	4:00:36.343	14 laps	1 lap	2:26.709
12	16	B	Match-it	88	4:00:37.967	15 laps	1 lap	2:12.173
13	33	C	Mad Cow	81	4:00:15.573	22 laps	7 laps	2:16.136
14	3	A	Pink Panther	19	41:06.319	84 laps	62 laps	2:08.076
15	41	A	Johan Minnaar	19	1:02:15.291	84 laps	21:08.972	2:10.201

Classification by class

Class	Pos. in class	No.	Competitor	Laps	Total time	Best lap
A	1	95	Dragon Energy	103	4:00:06.148	2:06.050
A	2	3	Pink Panther	19	41:06.319	2:08.076
A	3	41	Johan Minnaar	19	1:02:15.291	2:10.201
B	1	42	SA-US	102	4:00:50.332	2:11.186
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B	9	49	Wellnetix	90	4:01:08.010	2:11.358
B	10	16	Match-it	88	4:00:37.967	2:12.173
C	1	952	ATS Motorsport	89	4:00:36.343	2:26.709
C	2	33	Mad Cow	81	4:00:15.573	2:16.136



Index of Performance

Pos.	No.	Class	Competitor	Best lap	Laps	Total time	IoP
1	42	B	SA-US	2:11.186	102	4:00:50.332	92.600%
2	131	B	Shake 'n Bake	2:13.809	100	4:01:25.510	92.374%
3	72	B	Backdraft Racing	2:10.847	102	4:01:29.258	92.112%
4	31	B	Team di Matteo	2:11.096	101	4:01:26.502	91.400%
5	94	B	Lanz/Spies	2:11.942	100	4:01:31.330	91.049%
6	11	B	Qhubani	2:12.242	100	4:02:14.654	90.984%
7	952	C	ATS Motorsport	2:26.709	89	4:00:36.343	90.446%
8	95	A	Dragon Energy	2:06.050	103	4:00:06.148	90.122%
9	78	B	Wonderbread	2:10.269	99	4:01:14.691	89.098%
10	127	B	Black Beauty	2:11.045	96	4:01:23.124	86.862%
11	49	B	Wellnetix	2:11.358	90	4:01:08.010	81.713%
12	16	B	Match-it	2:12.173	88	4:00:37.967	80.560%
13	33	C	Mad Cow	2:16.136	81	4:00:15.573	76.494%

