

# Leading the Way at the 2010 ABSA Cape Epic

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Having cycled over 220 hours amongst the five teams, Team Toyota can be proud of an outstanding 2010 performance from employees and celebrities alike.



When the race launched in October last year, there was no turning back for Team Toyota. Each member had committed to competing in the toughest stage cycle race in the southern hemisphere - the ABSA Cape Epic.

As the official vehicle supplier to the event, the Toyota brand was set to have a strong presence off the field. It was up to the selected team to prove themselves on the field. One such member who was eager to race was Senior Vice President Andrew Kirby, set to compete with his wife Cindi. "I am a very passionate cyclist and had absolutely no hesitation in getting behind the Toyota brand and driving it all the way."

And that's exactly what the team did. CycleLab Toyota's Andrew McLean won the masters category with partner Shan Wilson, and placed 18th overall.

Amabubesi riders Danie Smit and Kobie Pruis, now riding in their fifth consecutive Epic, unfortunately did not fare well as Danie took a vicious fall and broke his rib on day 5. Kobie competed the race in a very respectable time of 42 hours and 45 minutes.

Also having a solid race was fellow employee John Thomson riding with David Labuschagne, coming in with a total time of 43 hours and 12 minutes, and placing 102nd in the men's category.

The next team doing Toyota proud was Jeremy Thomson (ex-Sharks rugby professional) and Michael Mol (*Top Billing* presenter and Sportron CEO), despite Michael taking a terrible tumble on stage 7, resulting in a cracked clavicle. The powerful pair seemed to breeze through the Epic, placing 137th in the men's category and 190th overall. They clocked a time of 45 hours and 31 minutes.

Andrew and Cindi Kirby flung themselves 100% into the race at all times, working together as a tight-knit team. Their hard work ethic prior to the race paid off as they came in with a total race time of 53 hours and 21 minutes. Andrew enjoyed almost every minute. "There's no doubt that certain stages and days were far harder than others. But that's what's great about being in a team: together we pulled each other through each kilometre, spurred on by our teammates at most water points and every start and finish line."

Closing the 2010 ABSA Cape Epic account for Team Toyota was the gutsy Shaun Bartlett (ex-Bafana Bafana striker) and partner Bruce Diesel. When, on stage 2, it seemed that Bartlett could not go any further due to heat exhaustion, he was spurred on by his friend Bruce, the team of Toyota, as well as the hundreds of fans waiting at the finish line to greet him. "I cannot believe that I did it. This is far tougher than any football match I have ever had to play. This race is absolutely incredible. I am so proud of the majestic beauty of this country, and I have no doubt that the World Cup will show the rest of the world what we have in our own backyard!"

When asked what lesson he learnt from this event, Shaun smiled. "The lesson that I have learnt from cycling the Epic, is that I should stick to cycling!"

Diesel and Bartlett's total event time was 57 hours and 7 minutes, placing them 398th overall.

A CSI donation will be made to the Toyota SuperCycling Academy on behalf of the two celebrity teams of R100 per kilometre for every one of the 722 kilometres completed in the race.

Team Toyota:

Team 1: Danie Smit & Kobie Pruis

Team 2: John Thomson & David Labuschagne

Team 3: Andrew Kirby & Cindi Kirby

Team 4: Michael Mol & Jeremy Thomson

Team 5: Shaun Bartlett & Bruce Diesel

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