



**AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST DESERT RACE
QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND 8 – 11 JUNE 2018**

**'Ride High Stokie' | Message from the Finke Desert Race Club
Sunday 28 January 2018**

On the Australia Day long weekend in Alice Springs each year, the Alice Springs Motorcycle Club's Deep Well Enduro heralds the start of the years racing calendar. Lots of the best riders doing what they love in oppressive heat on magic desert country. This year's celebration of riding turned to devastation as Daymon Stokie, one of Alice Springs finest and hardest working desert racers was tragically killed in an accident.

For those who didn't know him, Daymon was at the top of his game and had worked hard to get there. He had competed in the Tatts Finke Desert Race on 7 occasions and worked his way up from a class placing in 2009, 5th outright in 2011 and other top 10 placements in 2012 and 2014. It was 2016 in my mind that was Daymon's break out year when his talent and work saw him finish 4th outright in the Tatts Finke Desert Race. That alone was a significant achievement but this was the first year he broke 4 hours overall and he had just three of the best riders ahead of him. Two months later he was part of a pony express win in the Sporties 12 hour. Daymon was then part of a Baja 1000 winning team in November 2016 before taking out the Gascoyne Dash in April 2017; the second time he had tasted victory there.

The win at the 'Gasdash' was costly with him breaking a hand and needing surgery with screws inserted into his hand. It was less than 2 months to Finke 2017 and somehow he got to the start line. Daymon was third fastest in Prologue and second into Finke for the overnight stop. A short way into Day 2 Daymon hit the lead and never looked back. He rode through the intense pain of a swollen hand and made the race his. Daymon was the first local rider to win Finke in 11 years and his was an extremely popular win. He had joined an elite group numbering just 20 who had been crowned King of the Desert. I was lucky enough to stand on a stage with him last year to discuss his Finke win. I was mighty proud of him.

Daymon had many successes; I've only mentioned a few. To the other riders and spectators who assisted or witnessed the St John Ambulance staff working on Daymon, I urge you to speak to family and friends about what has happened. These tragedies affect people differently.

Some will say that Deep Well will be remembered as the scene of tragedy. Others will make the trek to Deep Well in the future to visit this harsh yet beautiful site to remember this young man and celebrate his achievements in a sport he loved.

On behalf of the Finke Desert Race committee, I extend our deepest sympathies to Daymon's partner, his parents, brothers and sisters and extended family. Daymon was a member of the Finke family and many of them will be struggling to come to terms with the news.

**Antony Yoffa
President
Finke Desert Race**



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