

MEDIA RELEASE
Sunday, 9 June 2019

LOCAL HERO DAVID WALSH IN PRIME POSITION TO WIN HIS MAIDEN KING OF THE DESERT TITLE

Alice Spring's own David Walsh (#2 KTM) is one step closer to his first King of the Desert title after blitzing the bike field to arrive at Finke in 1 hour 55 minutes and 25.7 seconds on Race Day 1 of the 2019 Tatts Finke Desert Race.

The hometown hero lead the 612-strong field from the start line as he aims to take the elusive top step of the podium, having finished second in 2018, 2014 and 2012.

Walsh was just over 5-minutes clear of next-best Jacob Smith (#299, Husqvarna FE), who moved up two places from a Prologue position of 4th.

In his eleventh Finke campaign, Smith (Condobolin, NSW) sits 5 minutes and 0.7 seconds behind Walsh as he looks for his first podium finish at the event in six years.

Beau Ralston (#295 Husqvarna FE) was just behind his teammate, setting a time of 2 hours 2 minutes and 33.9 seconds on the rough and dusty track.

In his second Finke campaign, Geelong's Callum Norton (#X98 KTM 450) was one of five Victorians to finish in the top ten, coming in fourth ahead of tomorrow's return leg to Alice Springs.

The eighteen-year-old race favourite is only 8 minutes and 37.5 seconds behind the race leader, an impressive effort with many other race favourites not making it to the Finke checkpoint on Day 1.

Fellow Victorian's Jack Simpson (Seaford - #296 Honda CRF) and Sam Davie (Echuca - #292 Husqvarna FE) were fifth and sixth reaching the end of Day 1 with times of 2hours 5 minutes and 46.1 seconds, and 2 hours 6 minutes and 10.5 seconds respectively.

In seventh place and the first of the South Australian's to cross the line was Mt Gambier's Kent Collins (#4 KTM 500), 14 minutes and 35.1 seconds behind the leader.

In their first Finke campaigns Thomas Jones (#681 KTM 500) and Nicholas Waters (#282 KTM 500) rounded out the top ten in what was a difficult day for all riders competing in Australia's toughest off-road race.

Territorian Jack Dooley-McDonnell (#X99 Honda CRF) who third off the line this morning, failed to make the 223km journey to Finke as did race favourite Nathan Trigg (#10 Sherco).

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of writing himself into the AFL record books, Sydney Swans legend Tony Lockett (#894 KTM 500) commenced his ninth Finke Desert Race campaign, on track to finish the day inside the top 350 riders.



AUSTRALIA'S ULTIMATE DESERT RACE **JUNE 7-10, 2019**

After camping overnight, the bikes will leave Finke tomorrow (Monday) morning at 11.45am CST for the run back to the Alice Springs finish with the first bikes expected to arrive at approximately 2.05pm CST.

The 2019 King of the Desert will be crowned following the bikes return to Alice Springs tomorrow.

The 2019 Tatts Finke Desert Race is held in Alice Springs on the Queen's Birthday weekend from 6-10 June 2019.

2019 is the 20th year of Tatts' naming-rights partnership of the Finke Desert Race.

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