



Thomas Truter was one of the cyclists taking part in the 19km event at the Sugar Rush Classic over the weekend. Photo: JD Lotz

# Classic sprint finish

The Holla Sugar Rush Mountain Bike Classic produced two thrilling finishes on Sunday with both the men's and women's races being decided with a final sprint to the line.

After 45km of sublime riding on a mix of some of the best sections of the various Holla Trails' routes in Ballito, Julian Jessop and Stuart Marais were still locked together in the race for the men's title.

As they approached the line, Jessop managed to get his wheel in front and take the victory, but all was not lost for Marais as he maintains his top position in the race for the R25 000 first prize in the Quattro Roag Series.

Jessop's time for the 45km ride was one hour 52 minutes and 24 seconds with Marais credited with a time one second slower. Third was Andrew Johnson almost two minutes back with Leeroy Emslie claiming fourth and David Low wrapping up the top five.

After two legs of the Quattro Series, Marais has 186 points from his victory at Wartburg last month and the second position at Holla this weekend. That gives him a solid 44 point cushion ahead of Low before the third event, the Compendium Hill 2 Hill in April, an event Marais will not be able to ride as he has a cross country event in Gauteng that weekend.

In the women's race,

the experienced Natalie Bergstrom just managed to edge out Christie Leigh Hearder in the sprint and claim a victory which also saw her move to the top of the women's standing of the Roag Series, with Hearder now also moving up a position to second in the race for the biggest MTB series prize in South Africa.

Bergstrom and Hearder were in a class of their own and finished a massive seven minutes ahead of Colette Kriek with Rouxda Grobler and Belinda Mason completing the top five.

In the trail run, Mark Mackenzie was a comfortable winner of the 12km event ahead of Dane Davies and Jason Clarke, with Amy Burger powering to a huge win in the women's race as she finished fourth overall. Second woman home was Wendy Mills with Leigh Newell and Alison Wasserfall sharing third position.



In the women's race, Herve Rougier-Lagane going strong during the trail running event of the Classic. Photo: JD Lotz