

**PLANS TO KEEP AMASHOVA ALIVE DESPITE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Cycling South Africa have impressed many with the way they have taken the plight of the cycling community, and in particular event organisers, to the Government by trying to find solutions for this industry during the COVID-19 restrictions. Recent discussions with Cycling SA and other big cycling event organisers has given the Amashova Durban Classic team a glimmer of hope that one of SA’s oldest cycling races may still be a live event come October 2020. Coupled with the recent musings of Cycle Lab’s Sean Badenhorst in an article he published on Tread – the timing of hosting this year’s event, if it is permitted, is an exciting prospect. According to Badenhorst, during lockdown cycling related sales increased and the industry saw a surge of new customers dust off their bikes to get back out onto the road again.

“We are patiently waiting for government’s decision about how events will be positioned in the lower lockdown levels so life can return to ‘normal’,” says Amashova Race Director, Annie Batchelder. According to Batchelder, her team has already been in touch with the Disaster Management office in Durban as well as the Tourism Durban office to find a way to make the Amashova a success amidst the pandemic. “In the event that the race can still take place in October 2020, but under very strict self-distancing regulations, we have already been working closely with the likes of Cycling SA and other key organisations. Our number one priority in this planning phase is to make the necessary arrangements for safety and hygiene to ensure the safety of our cyclists and mitigate any risks of further outbreaks and COVID-19 transmission,” stated Batchelder.

However, should SA’s Department of Sports and Recreation not be open to this non-contact sport being opened again on a larger scale – the Amashova team have also started investigating taking the race virtual. According to an update from the organisers, should the beloved Amashova go digital this year plans would likely include an online expo, virtual goodie bags, a race day video of the route and the ability for cyclists to post their race day times online so their ride will still count towards their Green Number goals. There was even mention by the organisers of special merchandise being produced this year to commemorate the race still taking place during these unprecedented times.

Regardless of the event being live or virtual, the 2020 Amashova Durban Classic are delighted to announce that East Coast Radio is still on board as their official media partner for the race. “We have a longstanding relationship with the Amashova Durban Classic and appreciate what an important and popular event it is for the KZN community and the cycling fraternity at large. We believe that now more than ever it’s important to try support local businesses and we are excited for the innovations that Annie and her team will conjure up to make sure this is yet another memorable Amashova Durban Classic“, stated East Coast Radio’s Marketing Manager, Tanya Davis.

“This year for the first time ever we have introduced a special Refund Policy because of the COVID 19 pandemic. Full details and conditions around this policy are available on our website and upon request. We are appealing to all South Africans to continue supporting local businesses like ours and to remain interested and open to the exciting developments we are investigating to keep the spirit of the shova alive while maintaining the safety of our participants,” concluded Batchelder.

To find out more about entering the Amashova Durban Classic please visit [www.amashova.co.za](http://www.amashova.co.za).

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editor:**

**Tsogo Sun Amashova Classic**

The Tsogo Sun Amashova Durban Classic began in 1986 and has been successfully taking place for the past 33 years – making it SA’s oldest ‘classic’ cycling race. The idea of having a bicycle race on the route of the world famous comrades marathon was the dream of veteran Springbok Cyclist, Dave Wiseman and his friend Tony McMillian. Over the years the improvements on the route and road closures, accompanied by a steady increase of entries year after year and the involvement of some of the country’s top sponsors has helped make the ‘Shova’ one of the most loved and KZN’s biggest cycling race.

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