

HASIE BEATS BREEDE



by **Marana Brand**

Once again local farmers Hasie Lourens and Miles Fraser-Jones in their Team Infanta Infanta/Yamaha made a clean sweep of the third Breede River Challenge near Swellendam.

The river was at its lowest level since the inception of the race, sponsored this year by Toyota/Huizenmark, and turned into a real boat and engine destroyer for the record entry of 48 which came from Natal, Border and Eastern Province as well as the Western Province, Boland and Swellendam stalwarts.

In fact this must be the biggest field in a river event since the now-defunct Tugela River Challenge's heyday.

Although they have 10 years experience of inflatable racing on this river, and Hasie's knowledge of the Breede stretches even further back to his canoeing days, they got

caught out twice, making their win even more remarkable.

In the first leg from Robertson, the team had engine problems and lost about five minutes. They managed to solve their problems, however, and won that leg in the P750 class by three minutes.

On the second day things were even worse. Their boat burst at a carry-over point just after the start. They managed to repair the boat and, despite losing 20 minutes, they managed to catch and pass the field and get to the finishing point 25 minutes ahead of the field! A stunning performance which just underlines their huge superiority over all the others on this river.

They weren't the first to suffer from the hazards the low water exposed. During the pre-race reces on Thursday, many teams damaged boats and engines. Several had to withdraw after seriously damaging boats and

motors on rocks and causeways.

Current national champions Mark Louw and Rowland du Preez damaged their Robbiduck severely during a recce and had to have a replacement rushed down for them from Cape Town. However, it had to be a Gemini and NOT a Robbiduck! Nonetheless, they came third.

Rob Louw was knocked out of the race five minutes after it started when he hit a growler and broke the driveshaft.

Henning Blaauw and Albert Lombard started their season well with a second for Team Gemini with G van der Westhuizen and P Langenhoven (24 Riviere/Infanta) fourth.

The biggest hazard on the first leg was Dragon Falls, an uneven series of jagged rocks with precious little water over them. It called for lots of experience and not a few props.

The P550 class was no less interesting. The