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PRESS RELEASE

MOON AND LOVELL ARE NEW AUSTRALIAN SIDECAR CHAMPIONS

A magnificent and clever ride, particularly in the last two laps of the Final, and a season's focus, took young Queenslanders, Tyler Moon and Adam Lovell, to their first Australian Sidecar Championship at Mildura's Olympic Park speedway on Saturday night.

The RCA Civil Group, 2026 Australian Sidecar Titles was packed full of action over the whole of the ANZAC weekend with the last of the forty-two events charged with excitement, as the Title was at stake. The massive crowd in attendance enjoyed every action-packed minute and was most vocal in their support of the efforts of all riders over the whole weekend.

The event that everybody had come to Mildura to watch on ANZAC night did not disappoint, there was strong action right from race start and for the whole four lap journey. Top point scorers, the unbeaten, Justin Plaisted / Brian Anthony, with first selection, picked the gate two, Blue start position. Former Champs, Trent Headland / Jaxon Rayner, selected the Red, gate one start position using their second pick, which was done on count back from Tyler Moon / Adam Lovell, as each team had scored thirteen points, but the SA pair got the nod, as they had beaten the eventual Champions in their final heat ride. Moon / Lovell then selected gate three, the White gate position for their vital start. Selections were made Trackside, which left the four times Champions, Mark Plaisted / Ben Pitt, to the gate four, Yellow start position, as it was the only place left.

The RCA Civil Group Final got away with Justin Plaisted / Brian Anthony driving hard into turns one and two with Moon / Lovell sitting just to the rear, but well placed. Trent Headland / Jaxon Rayner caught a rut which steered them infield from the line with a race exclusion being the consequence. Headland / Rayner drifted wide through turn two, knowing that they had transgressed as Mark Plaisted / Ben Pitt kept low in turn two, exiting in third position down the back straight. Plaisted / Anthony dominated down the back straight, leading the young Queenslanders by a nice margin into turn three. Moon / Lovell made ground through turns three and four and were travelling on a tight line, whereas Plaisted / Anthony were positioned mid-track. The positions were held for two laps, but Moon was working hard and gaining ground using the tighter line. He gained further and by the time lap three was to start, Moon was right up inside the Plaisted position and he was able to maintain the Queensland challenge. A superb lap three to Moon / Lovell, positioned them well and they had moved by on Plaisted / Anthony, coming under the former Champ through turn four, as the final lap flag was shown. Going into turn one for the final time the youngsters were able to move cleanly and clear of the early leader and they consolidated their position by the exit of turn two. Tyler Moon / Adam Lovell continued their push and opened a comfortable break on Plaisted / Anthony, which they were able to hold until they saw the "double checkered Flags" indicating that they had achieved that major prize a prize which was so wanted and so hard worked for, the RCA Civil Group, 2026 Australian Sidecar Championship.

What a race, what a Championship, what a magnificent Australian Championship ANZAC weekend at Olympic Park, Mildura ?

The massive crowd were very warm in their applause for the popular win by this, much travelled, Queensland team, who had ridden Mildura on a number of occasions during the season, including winning the 2026 Victorian Sidecar title way back in March. Tyler and Adam and their team have been very focussed all season and this popular result has been very well received.

Tyler and Adam had saluted twenty-five years after Tyler's amazing father and veteran Sidecar exponent, the late Gary Moon, won his only Australian Championship in 1991, with Paul Norton as passenger, in a tough meeting, at the Newcastle Motordrome.

Moon and Lovell celebrated immediately after their laps carrying the Checkered Flag with some "spectacular Wheelies" in turn one and turn three trackside, to the thunderous applause and constant cheering from many elated spectators. The Title was heading home to Queensland.

Justin Plaisted / Brian Anthony finished in second place ahead of the only other finisher, Mark Plaisted / Ben Pitt, who took third place ahead of the excluded, Trent Headland / Jaxon Rayner.

The prizegiving, which was held just after the final was run, was enjoyed by the many patrons who stayed for the presentation and the large number of fans who accompanied the teams onto the centre arena of Olympic Park. Presentations were made by family of RCA Civil Group, Directors of Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club and Club President, Jason Stewart, who, in the absence of any Motorcycling Australia officials, presented the prestigious, Duke of Edinburgh award, which is always presented to the winners of the Australian Speedway Championships.

It was noted at the prizegiving ceremony that whilst action can be sometimes very tough on the race track, and that teams are heavily opposed to each other, that four times Champion, Mark Plaisted had "loaned" a clutch to the eventual winner, Tyler Moon, during the course of the Championship event. This generous gesture demonstrates the friendship between competitors, such is the nature and the constant camaraderie, which exists between all Sidecar teams.

Racing for both nights of competition was tough and fast, with some teams recording their very best race times ever seen at Olympic Park. The Track staff at Olympic Park were warmly praised by the teams for the splendid tracks which were presented for both nights racing. The Mildura Club ensured that all teams present at the Titles were given their best chance to succeed, given the effort that they had all made to present in an appropriate way at Olympic Park. The Mildura Club is extremely grateful that so many people made such an effort to contribute to a wonderful weekend of entertaining and memorable racing.

The Club was warmly applauded too for the very sensitive way in which the pre-meeting, ANZAC night ceremony was conducted. Mildura Club had sought approval from the Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc, for their endorsement to conduct the Championship event on ANZAC Day. The local RSL approved of our conduct of the event and agreed to provide personnel to conduct an appropriate ceremony prior to the Title meeting. Mildura Motor Cycle Club enjoyed the company of Brad McGlashan, President Mildura RSL, Rob Birnie, Vice President, Mildura RSL and Club member, Peter Blaby, Vice President, Merbein RSL Sub Branch infield, to conduct a solemn and poignant ANZAC service. Championship teams respectfully surrounded the Flag, flying at half-mast while Vice President, Birnie gave an ANZAC commemoration address and President McGlashan then recited to "Ode" to the large, but respectful patrons in attendance. The "Last Post" and "Reveille" were sounded with the Flag then raised to Full mast. The singing of the National Anthem was sung on both nights by local girl, Hazel Symonds, with her lovely renditions of "Advance Australia Fair", including the rarely heard, second verse on each occasion.

Competition all weekend was tough, with some excellent times recorded by all riders during both events.

The very tough "B" Final on Title night was won by former and four times Champions, Mark Plaisted / Ben Pitt, ahead of the youngsters, Nate Headland / Harry Hearne, with Brodie Cohen / Jesse Headland filling third place ahead of local star, Byren Gates / Damian Egan.

Plaisted and Pitt had to try for their fifth Title chance via the secondary final, as they had dropped points in their second heat against brother Justin and Brian Anthony, then Nate Headland / Harry Hearne and SA's Shane Rudloff / Kane Golding. Their zero heat score had put pressure on the defending Champs for the rest of the night, but, as true champions always do, they were able to get into the minor final on a count back from Byren Gates / Damian Egan. The remaining positions from the "B" final went on to take the fifth to seventh placings in the Title, which saw Nate Headland / Harry Hearne in fifth place, Brodie Cohen / Jesse Headland in sixth and local star, Byren Gates / Damian Egan complete the Title in seventh place.

What was particularly noticeable at this 2026 Championship was the growing influence of some younger teams on the Sidecar scene. The win by Moon / Lovell is a move in the right direction, as they are among the younger group of very experienced teams in the sport even though Moon is only just into his thirties. Nate Headland / Harry Hearne from SA, head up the youngest group and are joined by similarly aged, Max Howes / Riley Commons, from Broken Hill, as are young WA pair of Jonah Sita / Morgan Cornwell and Brandan Warke / Mitch Danks-Firth, from Queensland. Zac Campbell / Jason Williams have a little youth on their side, as do Josh Wells / Jamie Forrest and although they did not make it into the Championship event, the younger group who did, rode with great skill and appeared to ride fast, safely and well above their level of experience.

While the Mildura season has been brought to a close by the conduct of this amazing Title event, the Club promises some great events in the next season. Season 2026 / 2027 will begin in October, later this year and will feature a group of visiting Solo riders, as is the Mildura practice. The visiting riders will be resident at Mildura prior to Christmas, as usual and Mildura will then host, Round One of the 2027 Australian Solo Championship. As usual, the Olympic Park season will turn its attention to more concentrated Sidecar action, with the news that Mildura Club will do something very special, for the conduct of the 50th Anniversary of the Mildura Sidecar Spectacular, which is the longest running, non-title event, in Australian Speedway.

Ends

27th April 2026

For further information, please contact

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