Crash not enough to slow Thompson down

MOTORSPORT reaches fever pitch on Saturday and Sunday nights with the 2015 Australian Speedway Sidecar Championships at Arunga Park.

Alice Springs' Garth Thompson has been declared fit to ride after a spectacular crash at the track on Saturday night.

Riders from all around Australia and overseas, who featured in last weekend's Sidecar Grand Slam Championships, will showcase their talents across both nights with the champion of the final 18 riders on Sunday to be decided.

Thompson, the only Alice Springs-based rider, was hospitalised for the night after the crash. He will have Read Dunn as winger.

“We’re getting parts organised and have a fair bit of repairs on the bike and at the moment the plan is to have a crack at it,” Thompson said.

Thompson’s bike crashed into Mildura rider Byres Bates’ bike after it lost a tyre in last weekend’s DyoVest Sidecar Grand Slam Final.

“It went flat straightaway and basically brought it to a stop,” Thompson said.

“We don’t have brakes on our bikes or anything like that and it happened that quick and had nowhere to go.”

The accident has not fazed him and he is racing to go in what he described as a highlight.

“Trying to get a run in the Aussie titles would be awesome,” Thompson added.

To get through Saturday’s qualifying round is the first challenge.

“The top eight of that go through to the final on Sunday, which is the Australian titles field, so realistically there are two separate events,” Thompson said.

“There’s already eight seeded drivers for the Australian title on Sunday and then the qualifying night gets you the rest of the field to fill that up. Our aim is to get in the top half of the field because I want to be riding Sunday.”

Meanwhile Roxby Down’s Trent Headland and Englishman swinger Daryl Whetstone took out last Saturday night’s event ahead of father/son pair of Mick and Jesse Headland from South Australia.

Roundout the placing were Victorian pair of Bates and Mick O’Lauchlan.

The format for Saturday night is 20 heats and the top eight go through to Sunday night’s championship event and join the eight state and national champions.

Events serve up sporting feast

The 37-year-old Heaver will be out to continue his amazing run of eight opens in succession when the competition tees off.

Heaver, who won his first open title in 2008, has been a dominant figure on the picturesque Alice Springs course, claiming the runner-up trophy on four occasions before he began winning.

A total of 120 competitors are expected this weekend for the male and female components of the open and the reigning champ said he was expecting his toughest test yet to hold on to his crown.

“As far as I know it is going to be one of the strongest fields certainly in the last 10 years, it is going to be pretty hard work,” Heaver said.

“I will just go out there enjoy it and see what happens. Anything is possible over the tournament.”

The format of the open is 54 holes stroke play starting on Saturday and finishing on Monday afternoon.

The weekend of action will start tomorrow with a four-person Am-brose event to kick the festivities off at the course.

The real stuff begins on Saturday with a car on offer to any lucky golfer who lands a coveted hole-in-one during play on the first day of play.

Alice Springs Golf Club president Steve O’Bartil said this year’s tournament carried extra weight with it being the 30th time the open had been played.

He said there would be many chances to end Heaver’s reign but said spectators needed to keep their eyes on local junior Mitch Gridley.

The 16-year-old Gridley recently claimed the Alice Springs Junior Golf Open’s Paul Pearson Cup.

Heaver on course to maintain triumphant run

Jordon Gerrans

CENTRALIAN golfer Kerryn Heaver has his eyes on keeping his outstanding streak alive this weekend during the 30th edition of the Alice Springs Open at the Alice Springs Golf Club starting tomorrow.

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