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Dakar Rally
4th - 17th January 2015



Three MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles on the very top

- First stage win for Nani Roma and Michel Périn
- Five MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles hold top-10 positions

Today, the navigation proved to be the key factor on the way to success. The navigators of three MINI ALL4 Racing crews delivered in great style and so, they made for a great result. Nani Roma (ESP) and his co-driver Michel Périn (FRA), racing for the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team, won the stage with a lead of more than six minutes over the Qatar Rally Team pairing Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA). Meanwhile the Russians Vladimir Vasilyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov finished third. In the overall standings, Al-Attiyah extended his lead over Giniel de Villiers to nearly 24 minutes. Altogether, five MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles now hold top-10 positions.

“This win was for my guys,” Roma beamed. “It was a tough day but Michel did a fantastic job.” Al-Attiyah also was delighted: “What a great day. We succeeded in extending our lead massively and now, we have to defend this lead. The coming days won’t be easy as I will have to stay focused – but we can make it. Today’s stage was the most difficult one of the entire Dakar.”

Konstantin Zhiltsov who already impressed with a great navigation performance some days ago once again delivered in fine style. “Navigating proved to be extremely difficult today as there were several tracks and you couldn’t see anything, in the Feh Feh,” he explained. “You believed to be on the right track but then, there was another, parallel one. The special waypoint was far away and if you missed the compass direction by just one or two degrees you were lost – at once.” With their fourth place, the Russians leaped from 12th to 8th position in the overall standings.

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Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL) and his French navigator Xavier Panseri as well as the Argentinean Monster Energy Rally Raid Team pairing Orlando Terranova / Bernardo 'Ronnie' Graue unfortunately lost their way while looking for the waypoint, thus losing several minutes. At the end of the day, they finished sixth and seventh respectively. "Annoying as it cost us the chance of closing in on Yazeed," said Holowczyc.

The two Dutchmen Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar came tenth, in today's stage. Unfortunately they missed a waypoint and got a penalty of 40 minutes. "We were searching this waypoint for around 30 minutes and then decided to move on, this seemed to be the best compromise for us," van Loon explained the situation. Nevertheless the Dutch still holds the fifth place in the overall standings. Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ) and Anton Nikolaev (RUS) finished 13th and are tenth on aggregate. China's Zhou Yong and his German co-driver Andreas Schulz finished 16th today and hold now 12th in the overall standings. Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) crossed the finish line in 27th position, but also got a 40 minutes penalty for missing a waypoint and dropped back to position 37.

Meanwhile, Guerlain Chicherit and Alex Winoqc and their Buggy All Terrain made for the biggest surprise of the day by securing the sensational third place. But the two French had to work on their buggy during the liaison and arrived late at the start. This time the organisers added to their time so that in the end they finished the stage in position 18.

Tomorrow, the competitors once again will cross the Andes to return to Argentina. Temporarily, the racing will be contested at 4,400 metres above sea level. A 385-kilometre liaison section will be followed by a 358-kilometre special stage and another 116 kilometres to the bivouac.