



PRESS RELEASE

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The Penultimate Stage Of The Dakar AnUnlucky One

Rosario/Židovice - Incredible misfortune befell the racers in the penultimate stage of this year's Dakar Rally. The twelfth timed test proved as rather tricky. Moreover, the crews, already coming close to the finish, had to tackle the intrigues of the track as well as unbelievable technical problems. As a result, Martin van den Brink or Artur Ardavichus with his Roudnice mechanic Daniel Kozlovský were eliminated from the fight for a solid ranking.

„The penultimate track was very intriguing. The roads were very narrow and crooked. We were thrown out off the track several times and cut a few trees and fences. On top of that, we even had a wheel defect. I was glad that we got to the finish and I was not alone. My colleagues felt equally lucky. Thank God there's just one more stage to go,” said the relieved Daniel Kozlovský, mechanic from our team, who arrived on thirty-second place with his Kazakhstani pilot Artur Ardavichus following the trouble prepared by the penultimate episode.

Friday's distance from Termas Rio Honda to Rosario was the longest of this year's 37th year in terms of total amount of kilometres. The crews had to go 1,024 km, out of which almost three hundred were measured. The timed stage looked more like a track of a WRC race, the typical new trend at the Dakar – fast specials and minimal difference between the racers. Every error or technology failure brings a great loss. Martin van den Brink, pilot from the Dutch Mammoet Rallysport going on the Renault K420 4x4 racing special developed in our technology centre could talk about it. He was successfully pushing forward but only a while after he overtook Aleš Loprais, his servos steering seal cracked. *“The fluid poured out and the steering assist system was gone. On a winding track like this, problems with steering are pure hell. Besides, we were going quite well. It's really annoying but things like this simply happen. Dakar is unpredictable, you can never be sure about anything,”* shrugged his shoulders Martin van den Brink, who completed the stage together with his team mate Pascal de Baar on 43rd and 42nd position respectively with a loss of more than several hours after on th winner.

The Bonver Dakar Project team's boss Tomáš Vrátný got out off the track a few times, knocking over several fence posts. *“We're experimenting with the setting of shock absorbers and trying to use the Dakar to collect as much data as possible. Unfortunately, we took the experiment a little too far and after the trip out off the track we realized that we can't finish the track in other style than sharply,”* commented Vrátný, who had a narrow pass around a cow and got to the test's finish on fifteenth place, fifteen minutes after the winning Stacey.

Stage twelve of the race was overruled by Dutch crews, who occupied complete podium. First place was Stacey's before his Dutch countrymen van Vliet and de Rooy. However, situation is quite different in the overall ranking. The winners' podium is all-Russian, with Mardev in the lead followed by Nikolaev and Karginov.

The concluding stage from Rosario to Buenos Aires will bring the final four hundred kilometres, out of which a hundred and seventy will be measured. That will be the last bit of the total portion of 8,159 km in the trucks category.

Results - trucks - Stage 12: 1. Stacey (NED) Iveco 3:33:09, 2. Van Vliet (NED) MAN +0:18, 3. De Rooy (NED) Iveco +0:28, 4. Sotnikov (RUS) Kamaz +1:09, 7. Kolomý (CZE) Tatra +2:18, **15. Vrátný (CZE) Tatra +17:07**, 22.

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Loprais (CZE) MAN 25:05, 23. Szustkowski (POL) Tatra +26:16, 32. Ardavičius/Kozlovský (KAZ/CZE) Tatra +38:54, 42. de Baar (NED) Renault Trucks +1:06:06, 43. van den Brink (NED) Renault +1:17:39.

Overall: 1. Mardeev (RUS) Kamaz 41:59:07, 2. Nikolaev (RUS) Kamaz +12:43, 3. Karginov (RUS) Kamaz +48:40, 4. Loprais (CZE) MAN +1:45:43, 5. Sotnikov (RUS) Kamaz +2:24:10, 7. Kolomý (CZE) Tatra + 4:02:22, 14. Vrátný (CZE) Tatra +9:36:36, 17. van den Brink (NED) Renault Trucks +11:03:36, 19. Szustkowski (POL) Tatra +12:26:38, 22. Ardavičius/Kozlovský (KAZ/CZE) Tatra +17:20:35, 31. de Baar (NED) Renault Trucks +28:58:23.

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