

Soltys fought with the sand; Aliyyah Koloc did well in the dunes today

For the first 114 kilometers, the Buggyra ZM Racing crews got a taste of the dreaded Empty Quarter desert, in today's tenth stage of the Dakar.

TALLIN, ESTONIA, January 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Jaroslav Valtr took sixth place and is now fifth in the overall truck standings. Martin Šoltys got back from the desert in eighth position, just behind his team-mate. Róbert Kasák finished 17th after today's duels with the dunes and is 20th overall. In the T3 - Lightweight Prototypes category, Aliyyah Koloc set the eighteenth fastest time today, making her 35th in the overall standings. Josef Machacek was classified 20th today and is still only a place behind the top ten in the current overall standings of this category. The Dakar Classic drivers have completed the first part of their marathon stage. Radovan Kazarka finished fourth, which was sufficient to maintain his third place overall in his category.



Jaroslav Valtr did not start in the best possible way, but he managed to keep up with his competitors. "It sucked. I was still thinking about Aleš (Loprais), Jarda (Jaroslav Valtr's son) and Petr (Pokoro) but somehow we survived. The dunes weren't all that difficult. A kilometer before the finish, we couldn't drive up one dune even though we tried three times. On the third attempt, we hit a hump where the central chassis tube is and it made my legs tingle, but that went away. Then we drove around the dune and got to at the finish line," said the Tatra Buggyra ZM Racing driver at end of the day.

Martin Šoltys was surprised by how long the special stage took. "All the time, I was thinking that the stage would take an hour and a half, as we had said in the bivouac, but it was two and a half hours," he said. The Empty Quarter desert immediately proved to Soltys' crew how difficult it is. All three had to take shovels and dig in the sand. "The beginning was great, I had a very good drive. The first sixty kilometers were perfect. But then I made a mistake. We were left hanging at the top of one dune. We had to take shovels and start digging. We lost about fifteen minutes. Then we drove with Van den Brink. We were still struggling with the shock absorbers. It was warm and sticky, so the car didn't absorb the shocks all that well. That's why we slowed down a bit towards the end. These big dunes are going to be crazy," Martin Šoltys explained.



Róbert Kasák was glad that he didn't get stuck in the dunes and that there was no need to shovel sand. "It was quite a stage. The sand was soft and was one ridge after the other. The last uphill climb was pretty tricky, but we managed. You go over a dune and you don't know what's behind it. We drove on the front bumper, but that is normal in stages like these," said the Tatra Buggyra Slovakia driver.

"We had to decide whether to go around the dunes or go over them and how to catch the checkpoints. We preferred to take our time and look around on the ridge to see what route we would take," added Kasak's navigator Tomáš Kazarka, for whom it is his first Dakar.

On the dunes, Aliyyah Koloc had to tame her Buggyra Can-Am DV 21 whose rear axle was not in ideal condition after one of the jumps. "During the first leg in the Empty Quarter desert, there were dunes everywhere. The timed section was short but all the more challenging. There were a lot of dunes of difficulty two. We got off to a fast start and soon caught Martin Soltys and passed him. Aliyyah drove very well in the dunes. On one of the bigger dunes, about 40 kilometers before the finish, we went a bit askew and had a small problem with the rear axle. The Can-Am was a bit shaky until the finish, but Aliyyah handled it very well," praised navigator Stéphane

Duplé his driver Aliyyah Koloc.

Josef Machacek was bothered by the long, more than five hundred kilometers long drive to the start of the stage but he enjoyed the drive in the dunes. "The crossing was terribly long. It was cold and the track marshals weren't too kind with us as we couldn't even put on a makeshift window. Then there were 114 kilometers of dunes. I guess that was a warm-up for the next stages. Our cars have no problem with the dunes, so it was a nice drive," the six-time Dakar winner said with a smile.

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