

Aliyyah Koloc is on par with the famous Sainz. Valtr and de Baar finished in the top five

This year's Dakar Rally started with a 27-kilometre prologue in Al-Ula.

AL ULA, SAUDI ARABIA, January 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Making her Dakar debut in an elite Ultimate class car, Aliyyah Koloc was able to match the legend that is three-time winner Carlos Sainz. Today, the 19-year-old driver set a time within a second of "El Matador" and finished 35th. In the truck category, Jaroslav Valtr took fourth place, and Pascal de Baar in another Tatra finished fifth. Newcomer Daniel Stiblík was classified as twenty-fourth.

Aliyyah stepped out of her Red-Lined REVO T1+ car with a smile on her face. "I'm satisfied with how we performed. We made a few mistakes, and we want to work on that. I feel confident with the new car and look forward to the first stage tomorrow. The prologue was quite fast, and the competitors are evenly matched. There were many ruts on the track, so navigation was not a problem," said the racer.

Initially, she couldn't believe that she matched Sainz's time. "That's not bad at all. Carlos Sainz is a legend and an amazing driver. So, to set a time like him is, of course, very nice. But I'm going to try to focus on myself and just get better every day, and then we'll see where we end up," Aliyyah Koloc said.



Jaroslav Valtr was the fastest of the trio of Tatra trucks in Buggyra colors today. "The prologue was amazing, and the track suited us. We fought on the track, we were finding our way, and I think we drove very well. We have to keep looking for the right path. We're completely off the track that the other trucks are on. We're struggling, but we're handling it well," he said at the finish.

Pascal de Baar enjoyed his first measured kilometers in the Tatra Buggyra EVO3. "It was like a dream. The car performed great. The prologue was short but challenging, with many turns, uphill, and downhill. The Tatra performed perfectly. Fifth place is a great starting position with a brand new truck. We have to get used to the electronic roadbook, but Šiki is helping us a lot," said the Dutch driver.

"They gave us a lot of work to start with. There were big, deep sands. We tried everything we needed. Of course, we have to sort out some little things, but the Tatra's chassis worked perfectly," added Tomas "Šiki" Šikola, who plays the role of on-board mechanic in de Baar's crew.

"It was my first experience with sand. We got stuck on one dune and lost five seconds. But other than that, we're thrilled," said Dakar newcomer Daniel Stiblík.

The sigh of Buggyra's sporting director Robin Dolejš shows how demanding life is on the toughest rally in the world: "The first four days before the Dakar are the longest and the next ones are even longer. So we didn't get much sleep and we won't get much sleep."

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