

Valtr secures third place in the first stage of the Dakar Rally

19-year-old Aliyyah Koloc, representing Buggyra ZM Racing, tackled the demanding course skillfully, securing 37th place in the Ultimate class.

TALLIN, ESTONIA, January 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The trucks' course was shortened, and the Buggyra team performed admirably. Jaroslav Valtr, driving the Tatra Phoenix, earned third place, while Pascal de Baar, in the Tatra Buggyra EVO3, finished ninth. Newcomer Daniel Stiblík, in the second Phoenix, placed 22nd. All Buggyra representatives hold the same rankings in this year's Dakar standings as they achieved in this stage.

Aliyyah Koloc handled her first Dakar stage in an elite category car with aplomb. Gaining confidence with every kilometer in the powerful RedLined car, she reached the bivouac after dark, a delay caused by an earlier collision involving another car and a spectator at the start. Despite the late finish, she felt accomplished. She skillfully navigated the rocky terrain, avoiding both a puncture and a near accident. Koloc and co-driver Sébastien Delaunay encountered a buggy driving in the opposite direction amidst dust, and it was only Aliyyah's quick reflexes that prevented a crash.

The trucks' start was further delayed, leading the organizers to shorten their special stage at the 281st kilometer, 133 kilometers earlier than planned. Despite a technical issue, Jaroslav Valtr showcased the durability of the Tatra. He navigated the stony fields effortlessly, finishing third,



even with a diesel pump issue that reduced acceleration. His performance was particularly strong on the rocky sections of the stage.

Dutch driver Pascal de Baar is continuously adapting to the Tatra Buggyra EVO3. Learning how the car handles on sand and stones is crucial. He compared the final section, filled with black lava rocks, to a lunar expedition. By driving skillfully, he avoided punctures and unnecessary delays. Eager for the upcoming race kilometers, de Baar is optimistic about competing for top positions once he fully masters the Tatra.

Aliyyah Koloc (#239, RedLined Revo T1+): "It was a very long day. We waited a long time at the start and didn't reach the bivouac until after dark. Fortunately, we didn't have to stop or change the wheel. Despite the sea of rocks, I remained vigilant, which paid off. The car's behavior on the rocky surface was different from the T3 class car I'm used to, so there's still a lot to learn. We got slightly lost and veered off track at one point. On our way back, we nearly collided with a buggy coming from the opposite direction amidst heavy dust. It was quite chaotic but we managed to get away safely."

Jaroslav Valtr (#604, Tatra Phoenix): "We had to make a stop at kilometer 20 due to an issue of the fuel pump. The electric drive was functional but delivered less fuel. I had to maintain full throttle as the car lacked acceleration. Nevertheless, I adapted to it. The terrain today was very challenging, with about a third being fast and the rest rocky. The last 60 kilometers were just endless rocks. Our chassis provided great support, which was key to achieving third place. I'm very pleased with this result."

Pascal de Baar (#605, Tatra Buggyra EVO3): "I drove at about 80 percent capacity today, getting a feel for the car's performance on sand and rocky terrain. Some sections felt lunar, covered in big black lava rocks. I prefer not to change wheels frequently, especially since they're costly, so I focused on avoiding punctures. I believe I'll be faster than Jaroslav Valtr once I'm fully accustomed to the Tatra."



Buggyra Racing Organisation

Buggyra Powersports OU

+ +372 5606-4169

buggyra@buggyra.com

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