

19-year-old Aliyyah Koloc shows speed and consistency in Saudi Baja

Less than 3 weeks after the finish of the epic Dakar Rally, the Saudi Baja hosted the opening rounds of the FIA World and Middle East Baja Cups this weekend.

HAIL, SAUDI ARABIA, February 12, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dubai-born driver Aliyyah Koloc finished an excellent seventh overall and fifth in class with her Red-Lined Revo T1+ run by Buggyra ZM Racing: a position she held solidly from start to finish of the challenging three-day event.

As well as her outright speed, Aliyyah's consistency was particularly impressive throughout the Saudi Baja: a firm indication of how effectively she is climbing a steep learning curve. At one point, she was even in the overall lead, showing much more seasoned competitors the way.

Fresh from her promising finish at the Dakar Rally last month, Aliyyah and experienced navigator Sébastien Delaunay were determined to the make the most of every opportunity to continue their momentum. Fast and rocky roads as well as canyons and desert dunes were on the menu, as the 42 world-class competitors raced through 500 kilometers of intense competition in the An-Nafud desert.

Aliyyah said: "First of all, it was a question of getting used to the car again a couple of weeks after the Dakar. The prologue was very slippery, but we were straight onto a good pace in the rally and passed lots of cars – until we found ourselves in the lead. That was a different type of challenge,



as when you are in front there are no lines to follow, so the navigation becomes a lot more complex. Like most people, we had a few issues, but we didn't actually get lost, so thank you to Sébastien and the whole team. We definitely learned a lot."

By the end of the first full day, Aliyyah and Sébastien held seventh: a position they would maintain all the way to the finish against strong opposition. This was despite lacking some power from their engine, which meant that they had to skirt round the bigger dunes rather than take the faster direct route and charge straight through them.

Sébastien, a veteran of the Dakar since 2009, added: "Aliyyah did a great job; very solid and consistent, despite a few small issues. This was an event that had a bit of everything, so she can definitely be proud of her progress."

The Buggyra team also used the event to refine their knowledge of the T1+ car and experiment with different set-ups and configurations throughout the three long days. The huge variety of the Saudi terrain meant that they were able to assess a wide range of scenarios.

Buggyra ZM Racing team principal Martin Koloc summarized: "We gained useful experience that helped us to push the car further and further. However, we definitely went the wrong way with the set-up on the final day, but Aliyyah still did a good job and generally we can be very happy with the performance and progress. Now we look forward to the next rally in just two weeks, which will be an even bigger test for us."

The team will be back in action at the world-famous Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge from February 25 to March 2, which attracts leading drivers from all over the world.

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