



MARATHON RALLY RAID MARATHON IN AFRICA 27th December 2009 – 10th January 2010

AFRICA ECO RACE INFO

LEG 7: BOULANOUAR / TABRENKOUT- 6 TH JANUARY 2010

Liaison: 0 km – Special Stage: 398,05 km – Liaison: 38,40 km

STRAIGHT FOR THE DUNES... FIRST ASSAULT!

As beautiful and captivating as ever... Mauritania ! In this sea of sand, the competitors were engulfed by the immensity that surrounded them. With sand-dunes stretching to the horizon, it was an amazing moment for all those who love the wide open spaces and the Sahara !

This first special stage in Mauritania was beautiful, with plenty of dunes... A totally new timed stage, a route which no previous rally had taken. On the day's menu, plenty of off-track, alternating fast plateaus, vegetation, grassy valleys, camel grass, dunes and rocky sections... Application and concentration was necessary... especially as the sand was particularly soft.

THE 'DESERT FOX' ON TOP FORM !

Between Boulanouar and Tabrenkout (around thirty kilometres from Akjoujt), the 398-km timed stage was far from restful, especially for those drivers unfamiliar with the dunes. In masterly fashion, Jean-Louis Schlessler, nicknamed the Desert Fox, won the stage in his Buggy, bringing in his wake his team-mate François Lethier, rather nervous of his first Mauritanian stage. Jérôme Pelichet, behind the wheel of his Wildcat, a light and agile car, was right behind the two blue buggies, while Jacky Loomans lost some time after hitting a big rock, which caused some damage to the underside as well as a small oil leak. Still on the pace, Edmond Pelichet enjoyed his day, admitting that he had a good feeling for the sand. Miroslav Kubicek was 'surfing' and really enjoyed himself. The Swiss driver did not get stuck a single time, having fun behind the wheel of his Range Rover Classic and finishing 6th !

In Team Egypt, « Mido » put in a fine performance ... lost time that did not change anything in the overall classification, as the Egyptian is holding tightly to his fifth position. In the Cotel buggy driven by Gilles Florin, the day was partly used to test (successfully) a new system of inflating and deflating the tyres. Recurring overheating problems nevertheless prevented the crew of Florin-Cotel from a good performance. Jean-Jacques Jousseau is continuing his apprenticeship. Discovering new playgrounds and new difficulties every day, the rookie, with his Toyota, completed the task with enthusiasm. It was more difficult, however, for the Ch'ti Kangoo... Having finished the last two stages at 100%, today's exercise was more complicated, even if Momo Asloun showed as much determination as ever... There were difficulties too for Rudy Goeminne's Buggy and the Toyota of Juan Aibar. As for Vincent Demonceaux, his engine is close to giving up. It is very disappointing, as the Bowler Nemesis has been extremely consistent.

Among the trucks, even if Miklos Kovacs dominates his subject perfectly, this 7th stage will stick in his memory. Over just 15 metres, he got stuck in the dunes no fewer than eight times. The Hungarian colossus and his navigators spent more than 90 minutes with their shovels. But that does not change the overall classification, because Elisabete Jacinto, facing injector problems, was not able to cross the main dunes. The Portuguese driver had to reach the bivouac on the tarmac. And well done to Noël Essers who claimed his second stage win !

On two wheels, Alberto Dottori claimed the stage win with a lead of two minutes ahead of Marco Capodacqua. The two Italians spent a while searching for the waypoints, but crossed the finish line together. Giovanni Stefani had some problems with a broken chain. There is still a long way to go... and the loop around Tabrenkout, tomorrow, should be the highpoint of this second edition of the Africa Eco Race.



CONTACT...

Copyright free (for press only) High-Definition pictures are available. Please send an email to presse@africarace.com for your login and password.

Press Department: presse@africarace.com