



SILK WAY 2017 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



S.6 Peterhansel and Nikolaev, victories good for the moral



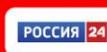
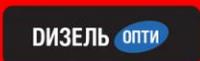
The penultimate special in Kazakhstan saw victory go to Stéphane Peterhansel (Peugeot 3008DKR n°106) in the car class. In the trucks it was Eduard Nikolaev (Kamaz-Master n°307) who took his first victory, just before the rally heads into China. As for the last few days, since the rally has been in the vast Kazakh steppes, it was the crews who started further back who had the least problems with the navigation.

Key points

*Cars: 'Peter' on the 'Kamaz highway'



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*T2: Di Lallo all alone

*Trucks: Nikolaev: good for the moral!

*Tomorrow: "In the land of black gold"

Cars: 'Peter on the 'Kamaz highway'

On arriving at the bivouac in Urdzhar, in the extreme south-east of Kazakhstan, it was all smiles again from Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret. After two particularly difficult days, the winningest pairing in rally-raid history took their 2nd stage win on the 2017 Silk Way Rally. And even if, by starting in 25th place, the Peugeot 3008DKR n°106, that rolled on Tuesday and had mechanical problems yesterday, was able to take advantage of the tracks left by the trucks, and especially the Kamaz, transforming the special into an autoroute, their win gave them a boost. Especially as with 8 days of racing and 2000 km of timed special still left to go, 'Peter' has come back into the top 10 overall and is only 1h52 off the 3rd place. After having caught Cyril Despres, the day's piste opener, Sébastien Loeb (Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104) initially decided to follow his team mate, so as to protect his overall lead. But as the navigation became more complicated, the two Frenchmen ended up swapping the lead all the way to the finish. The Chinese driver Han Wei (Geely SMG Buggy n°107), third on the day, takes the 4th place overall, while his fellow countryman, Lu Binglong (Baïcmotor n°130), once again got the better of his new French team mate, Christian Lavieille, who finished just behind him in 5th.

T2 category

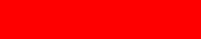
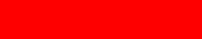
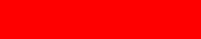
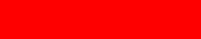
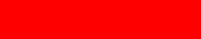
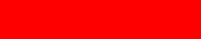
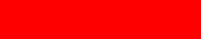
Other than the 5th stage victory of Adrian DiLallo (Isuzu MU-X n°135), the big news in the T2 class was the retirement this morning, before the start of the special, of the Toyota Land Cruiser n°133 of the Japanese driver Akira Miura and Laurent Lichtleuchter. Running off the track yesterday they damaged the front end of their vehicle beyond repair, reluctantly forcing the factory Toyota Autobody team to pull out of the race...

Trucks: Nikolaev : Moral booster!

For Eduard Nikolaev (Kamaz-Master n°307) this first stage victory could be the turning point of his Silk Way Rally. Forced out of the top 5, over 2 hours behind his team mates,



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who are leading the race, 'Prince Eduard', victim of a broken shaft drive on the third stage, was also smiling again this evening. Especially as he had to work hard throughout the special to fight off attacks from Siarhey Viazovich (MAZ n°304) and Martin Kolomy (Tatra n°311). Just 2 seconds behind Nikolaev, 57 km from the finish, the Belarusian's final charge was cut short when he lost nearly an hour with mechanical problems. The 'Supersonic Czech' Kolomy took over but in the end missed out on the top spot by just 39 seconds. Third on the special, Dmitry Sotnikov (Kamaz-Master n°303) holds the overall lead, 2m12s ahead of his team mate Shibalov, while Kolomy completes the podium at 12m53s.

ROAD BOOK

Tomorrow: "In the land of black gold"

Fourth and last special in Kazakhstan just before crossing over the Chinese border, this magnificent 106 km special will be pure driving pleasure. The vegetation will be dense and the scenery hilly. The finish will be almost at the border, before a 250 kilometres liaison to the bivouac at Karamay, famous for its oil refineries.

Quotes

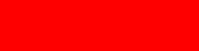
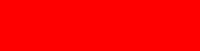
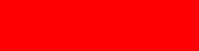
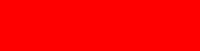
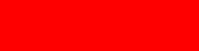
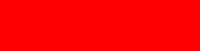
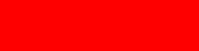
Cars

Stéphane Peterhansel (FRA/Peugeot3008DKR n°106): *"Starting in 24th place the navigation is much easier. All the grass has been squashed down because quite a lot of the trucks have already been through. It is almost like an autoroute. We maybe take 15 minutes off the second placed man, which is a lot, but we don't have much merit. After that we are 1h52 behind the third placed man overall, so I'm not sure it would be possible to chase after a place on the podium, with 8 stages left to run. Even if it was I think our boss would prefer us instead to look after Seb and Cyril."*

Sébastien Loeb (FRA/Peugeot 3008DKR maxi n°104): *"We came up behind Cyril at around mid-special and then sat behind him for a while. Then they made a navigation error and we went ahead. Then we made a mistake and they took the lead, and it was like that all the way to the finish. At the end particularly, where the navigation was really complicated. Now we will be going into China and the big dunes and the profile of the stages will be very*



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different. We've gained some experience now but we could still make a mistake or get stuck so we need to stay focused. We might have a big lead but the situation can change very quickly."

Cyril Despres (FRA/Peugeot 3008DKR n°100): "It is so difficult to open the piste here in the tall grass that we knew we were going to get eaten up (by Loeb). Visibility is really bad and when you're out in front you have to turn this way and that trying to follow the compass heading. Still we nevertheless managed to stay out in front for quite a while and when Seb caught us up we swapped the lead back and forward. There are still quite a lot of stages left so we just have to drive as well as possible and see what happens."

Bryce Menzies (USA/Mini John Cooper Works n°105): "We were pretty good at the beginning of the stage. We attacked hard and overtook 2 cars and then we got a puncture about half way through and the jack broke which really set us back. Then at the end, in the fine dust, it was impossible to overtake. Still not too bad - tomorrow is a short stage, so we'll attack and try and make up some time. Then we get into the dunes and hopefully we'll be able to pick up a bit more time..."

Pascal Maimon (Co-driver of Zhou Yong Toyota Hilux n°116): "Not too bad. He started quite slowly this morning and then Christian (Lavieille) past us and so we chased after him. Then he punctured so we overtook him. Then we punctured, maybe 80 kilometres further on, and Christian passed us back and we finished all alone. He's not bad in the dunes, so we're looking forward to China."

Adrian DiLallo n° 135 (AUS/ Isuzu Motorsports): "We had a big problem in the last sector at about the 300-kilometre mark. There was a make shift bridge over a deep creek crossing that had collapsed. Other competitors were getting stuck all around trying to cross so Harry and I rebuilt the bridge as best we could Aussie-style. We assembled the loose and broken bits of timber over as many big rocks as we could find then we dropped the mu-X into low range and tested its load bearing capacity. Then we carried on trouble free until the end of a spectacularly scenic special stage."

Lu Binglong n° 130 (CHN/Baiccmotor Motor Racing Team) "I liked this stage very much. In the first half of the special, the scenery was excellent, we even opened the window to the smell of the flowers. Over the second half of the stage, I stayed focus both mentally and physically in order to avoid mistakes. This was not an easy stage, my co-pilot did a good job to find the right route in the deep grass and my racing car also keeps its good performance."



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Trucks

Nikolaev: "The special stage was interesting, fast, with bumps and some tricky places. We had to cut some corners. Mostly we drove along with team mates, drove quickly, caught up with Shibalov, saw Sotnikov. But 120 kilometres from the finish, cutting the corner, we fell into a hole and broke the cabin suspension. But the crew is fine, no one was hurt."

Ardavicius: "I'm happy with the track, so cool! Just what this vehicle needs. I'm adapting to the truck more and more. It was difficult to catch up the other guys, but we worked with passion, without mistakes. We helped out a car crew - the guys made a mistake and got stuck in the riverbed. Despite De Rooy problems yesterday I know that he will fight to the end. And I know the guys from KAMAZ-master, we lived together for four years, ate, slept and worked together, and these guys will never give up."

Anton Shibalov: "There were a couple of places where the organizers made a detour for the trucks over little bridges, and at one of them we lost a little time. The second bridge was not easy to see and we had to drive back and lost a little more time. We chose to drive safely, because there is still a long race ahead. "



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