



SILK WAY 2017 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



S.12 Lavieille and Mardeev surf, the leaders suffer



Christian Lavieille (Baicmotor n°108) in the cars and Airat Mardeev (Kamaz-Master n°300) in the truck category win the 12th stage of the Silk Way Rally, run in the heart of the big dunes of the Gobi desert. Despite mechanical problems and time lost in this very demanding special, Cyril Despres (Peugeot 3008DKR n°100) and Dmitry Sotnikov (Kamaz-Master n°303) hold onto their leadership positions in the overall rankings.

Key Point

#Despres suffers



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#Sotnikov loses power

#Tomorrow: "Cathedrals... in the dunes"

Despres suffers

In the lead at CP2 (km 122), before attacking the big dunes of the Gobi Desert, with Stéphane Peterhansel shadowing him in his role as rapid assistance, Cyril Despres was looking forward to having fun in the sand. Instead his power steering packed up and he lost 20 minutes wrestling with the steering wheel of his Peugeot buggy. Luckily for the Frenchman, Bryce Menzies (Mini John Cooper Works n°105), his nearest rival overall, went completely off the route when he overtook Despres at the front of the race and lost even more time going back to find a waypoint. In the process the American slips down from 2nd to 4th overall. One of the main beneficiaries of the frontrunners' problems was Christian Lavieille (Baicmotor n°108) who started far back this morning to drive a perfect special. The ex-double world motorcycle endurance champion and recent winner of the Taklimakan Rally, takes his first stage victory on the race, just 19 seconds ahead of the Geeley SMG buggy of the Chinese driver Liu Kun and moves up one crucial place from 4th to 3rd in the rankings. Third on the stage the other Geeley SMG buggy of Han Wei also benefitted from Despres and Menzies' problems and moves up to 2nd overall, 43m22s behind leader.

Trucks

Sotnikov loses power

For the Kamaz-Master armada the objective of this 12th stage was perfectly clear: to counter the charge of Kolomy and his Tatra, that until now was stubbornly holding onto their 3rd place overall. Starting first on the road this morning, after yesterday's victory, the Czech driver didn't hold onto the lead for very long. Yet it wasn't the Kamaz that were the cause of his problems, but like Despres, a problem with his power steering that bought his Tatra Phoenix n°311 to a halt in the middle of the dunes. More than enough to encourage Airat Mardeev (Kamaz-Master n°300) to get on the gas. The winner of the 2016 Silk Way Rally 2016 nevertheless took the time to pull out Sotnikov, his leader, losing power and stuck on the crest of a dune. At the finish Mardeev takes his 2nd stage win, 2m15s ahead of Shibalov.



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Coming back respectively to 3m04s and 17m54s to Sotnikov overall, both can still hope for final victory in Xi'An. All of which promises a great battle between team mates tomorrow in the dunes of the Tenger desert, as beautiful as it is redoubtable...

ROAD BOOK

Tomorrow: Stage 13 ALASHAN YOUQI-ZONGHWEI "Cathedrals in dunes" 690,31 km

The last stage made up of two specials, the competitors will start early with a first timed section of 162 kilometres in the magnificent desert scenery – a dream day for photographers and cameramen. Navigation will once again play a crucial role on the 2nd 156 kilometre special, notably in the dunes, smaller than on the 1st special but technically demanding. It will be pure pleasure for the competitors to surf their crests! The bravest will be the ones that win the most time...Another page of the Silk Way Rally's history will be written on this day.

Christian Lavielle

A nice stage, a difficult stage, a long stage - it reminded me of the stages we used to have a long time ago in Africa, in Mauritania. Very tough for 150 kilometres, so very physically demanding for me and my co-driver. Good to win this stage – it makes me very happy for the team.

Yazeed Al Rajhi

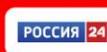
It was a good stage and I think we went well. We didn't push too hard and we got stuck maybe 50 kilometres from the end, but apart from that everything OK.

Cyril Despres

"It's never over, is it? We had a hydraulic leak that meant that our jacks and power steering didn't work when we got stuck. Normally we would have lost only a minute or so but we stopped and tried to fix it. All four of us – myself, David, Stephane and Jean-Paul – worked hard to find a solution but in the end we didn't manage to: it's not so easy in the middle of the desert. There were around 45 kilometres of dunes left to go and our only option was then just to drive to the finish. The car weighs around a tonne and a half, so driving it without power steering is far from easy. My arms and hands are sore but I'm very happy to be here now. And I already know that the Team Peugeot Total mechanics have a solution for this problem. It



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was really stressful as I knew that if we had another problem we could be stuck for hours. Honestly, it was one of the toughest days of my whole career. I'm looking forward to starting on a clean page tomorrow."

Stephane Peterhansel

For me the stage was very slow because we had to stop 2 times to help Cyril. That's my job now for the rest of the rally.

Eugenio Amos

They told me that my car was more solid than me and it turns out they were right. I'm completely broken and the car is still ok.

Byrce Menzies

The special started out really good. We caught the three guys in front of us and were leading the pack in the dunes and we got lost and we had to backtrack to try and find a waypoint and we lost 20-30 minutes. Apart from that it was a top day. The dunes were very tough and we're just glad to be at the finish.

Han Wei

It was windy in the stage today, we couldn't see much track on the ground, so we opened our own road. The stage was really hard, but we kept a good pace, didn't rush too much and made it to the finish. I saw Depress and Peterhansel on a dune fixing the car and I passed, it didn't effect me, I had to keep my own pace.

Lu Binglong

Regardless of the result, it was a really good stage for me, I felt very comfortable in desert. The two sections of the stage were totally different, the second part was in the famous Badain Jaran desert, it was really beautiful, there are big dunes and beautiful lakes in the desert, I think pilots who come here for the first time might even slow down a bit to see the amazing scenery. We had a little problem at CP2 and lost a few minutes but it was nothing. The sandy stages are very hard.

Liu Kun



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We had a tire pressure alarm when we are 100 kilometres away from the finish, there were some problems with the right rear tire, but we kept moving and very fortunately made it to the finish safely. I will keep following my team's strategy and cooperate with my teammate.

Airat Mardeev

"This was a tough day, there was a lot of sand. From dune to dune, there was nowhere to accelerate, just a lot of ditches and it was difficult to drive in the tracks of cars. We stopped once to reset the gearbox. Then we saw Dmitry Sotnikov in the sand, he was a little stuck at the top of the dune so we pulled him out and lost a little time. Then we saw Kolomy, who was stopped on the sand. Unfortunately, we broke a radiator. There were no problems with the motor but at the finish we saw that the temperature go up and could smell the antifreeze."

Anton Shibalov

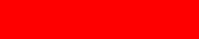
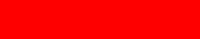
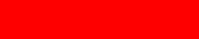
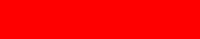
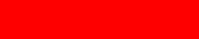
"In the first sand section we passed Kolomy and then opened the track. In the second sands we were first among the trucks, there were no problems with navigation. We drove smoothly and did not get stuck anywhere. Over the next stages we will go at our own pace. It is important not to make stupid mistakes - there are only two days left to go. "

De Rooy

It was a very nice special – the best one so far. Good fun in the dunes but on the last part we started to get low on diesel and sometimes we were losing power. We only had one puncture so we lost 8 minutes so not so bad.



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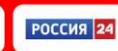




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