



SILK WAY 2021 RALLY

丝绸之路拉力赛



06/07/2021

S.5 GORNO-ALTAISK – GORNO-ALTAISK. GREETINGS FROM SIBERIA

Back to the plains for this 5th and last stage of the SILK WAY RALLY 2021. Before mounting the final podium, at the bivouac of Gorno-Altai, at the foot of the Altai Mountains, the competitors had to cover the last 587 kilometres of this 11th edition, which was finally run entirely in Siberia and reduced to 5 stages due to the health emergency in Mongolia.

At the end of the 3.108 kilometres covered, the event awarded its famous 'White Tiger' trophies to the winners of the different categories. Matthias WALKNER (RED BULL KTM FACTORY RACING) succeeded his team-mate Sam SUNDERLAND, who was absent due to injury, by winning the bike category. The Austrian, winner of the 2018 Dakar, adds another major event to his tally of achievements and takes the lead in the provisional FIM Cross Country Rallies World Championship standings.

After six years away from rally-raids, Guerlain CHICHERIT (CENTURY CR6 SRT) and co-driver Alex WINOCQ, made a winning comeback with a magnificent victory at the end of a breath-taking five-act battle with the Russian MINIs of KROTOV and VASILYEV.

The dream of Corsican Jean-Luc PISSON CECCALDI (ZEPHYR PH SPORT) and Jean BRUCY became reality: the French duo signed a fine victory in the T3 category, reserved for lightweight prototypes. As for the Russians Sergey KARIAKIN and Anton VLASIUK (BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK), they won the SSV class (T4) at the end of this third round of the FIA Cross-Country Rally World Championship.

Finally, in the heavyweight category, Dmitry SOTNIKOV, Ruslan AKHMADEEV and Ilgiz AKHMEZIANOV (KAMAZ-MASTER) gave the KAMAZ MASTER team a resounding debut for their new K5 model. As a bonus SOTNIKOV makes history by becoming the first driver in any category to win this SILK WAY RALLY for the third time.

S.5 – THE RACE

BIKES: MATTHIAS WALKNER TAKES VICTORY

Although this last special was a short one there was still plenty to race for in the bike class. While yesterday's overall leader Matthias WALKNER (RED BULL KTM FACTORY RACING) was in a reasonably comfortable position, second and third places on the podium were both up for grabs. A situation that encouraged Franco CAIMI (HERO MOTORSPORTS) and Daniel SANDERS (GAS GAS FACTORY RACING) to charge hard over the last 109 kms of this SILK WAY RALLY 2021.

At the finish it was Sanders who won the special, his third of the rally, though this remarkable achievement wasn't enough to grant him a place on the podium. Franco Caimi





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was even less rewarded for his efforts, missing out on second place by just 6 seconds! In the end it was experience that paid off, with ex-Dakar winner Walkner taking the overall +6:20 ahead of another impressive rally raid newcomer Skyler Howes. Commented the victor, "I really enjoy a lot. The stage was quite short but so much fun to ride – thanks to Russia."

In the quads victory went to Aleksandr MAKSIMOV (YAMAHA RAPTOR 700) ahead of the Polish veteran Rafal SONIK also racing a Yamaha Raptor.

CARS: CHICHERIT, BACK TO THE FUTURE!

Smiling broadly at the finish line of this last selective sector, Guerlain CHICHERIT and Alex WINOCQ (CENTURY CR6 SRT) savoured their victory while waiting for the arrival of their closest rival, the Russian Denis KROTOV (MINI JCW RALLY MSK RALLY TEAM). "I've been waiting for this for more than four years," explained the French driver. "I have always dreamed of winning this magnificent rally. We made some mistakes, many mistakes in fact, and it's a pity we couldn't go to Mongolia, but I thank the organisers for giving us these three extra days of racing. It was really wonderful and I can't wait to come and defend this title next year".

And if the final victory of the former winner of the FIA World Cup of Cross Country Rallies was decided during the two marathon stages in the mountains, Denis KROTOV and Konstantin ZHILTSOV can be proud of having won their MINI duel with Vladimir VASILYEV. The Russians are ahead of Jérôme PÉLICHET and Pascal LARROQUE (OPTIMUS RAID LYNX) who finished third on the podium, just as they did in the previous edition in 2019.

PISSON-CECCALDI AND BRUCY VICTORIOUS IN T3!

When Jean-Luc PISSON CECCALDI entered his ZEPHYR PH SPORT in this SILK WAY RALLY 2021 a few weeks ago, he probably didn't imagine it would lead him to the top step of the podium in the coveted Light Prototype category (T3). Guided by the experienced Jean BRUCY, the Corsican driver succeeded in getting the better of the BRP CAN-AM MAVERICKs of the Russians LEBEDEV and SILNOV who complete the final podium.

Victory in the SSV category (T4) went to the Russians Sergey KARIAKIN and Anton VLASIUK (BRP CAN-AM MAVERICK), despite spirited resistance and victory in the last special stage of French duo Mathieu MARGAILLAN and Axelle ROUX (CAN-AM).

TRUCKS: SOTNIKOV MAKES HISTORY

If there were five KAMAZ drivers at the start of this SILK WAY RALLY 2021 who had won the event at least once, there were only two of them who had already won the event twice. Both Dmitry SOTNIKOV and Airat MARDEEV were dreaming of adding a third gold medal to their trophy cabinet but in the end it was SOTNIKOV, driving the new K5





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generation truck who took the honours. A success snatched from under the prominent nose of the 'Kapotnik' of the Belarusian Siarhei VIAZOVICH (MAZ), author of his only stage victory today. Commented the Russian, "it's great that our new truck has made such a brilliant debut with a victory in its first race."

