



LEG 13 - NAZCA / PISCO (Peru)

DAKAR 2012 - Saturday 14th of January

Liaison : 100 km - Special Stage: 275 km

Hot in Pisco !

The 2012 Dakar caravan is closing in on its final destination, and this evening it is in the town of Pisco, around 300 km to the south of Lima. 'Pisco' is also the name of the Peruvian national drink, a grape-based spirit (to be drunk carefully) also found in Chile, the origins of which are claimed by both countries. But this evening, there is a heat wave over the bivouac (40 °C), and those competitors remaining in the Dakar will have to wait a bit longer before celebrating the finish, which will take place tomorrow. This 13th stage was once again redoubtable, both for the leaders and further down in the pack. Although Thierry Magnaldi and Zhou Jihong got through without problems, Isabelle Patissier will remember this 13th stage for a long, long time...

The day before the finish, there is no respite for the competitors. You have to earn the Dakar, day after day, and the 13th stage was no exception. There were plenty of potential traps to avoid over the 275 kilometres of timed stage, with one common factor in all the Peruvian stages : sand. Ergs to cross, dunes to climb over, and the constant threat of getting stuck in the sand were all on the menu today, along with another difficulty : driving alongside the Pacific Ocean.



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Once again, Thierry Magnaldi overcame these difficulties without too many problems, and set the 16th fastest time, despite not being in great shape. The driver from the Var is strengthening his third place on the two-wheel drive podium. In the 05 Proto, Zhou Jihong had a big fright when he lost a tyre, but luckily no real harm was done. He lost 15 minutes, and finished 21st on the stage. But it was Isabelle Patissier who suffered the most between Nazca and Pisco, stuck for over two hours in a dip, mid-way through the stage.

N° 331 Thierry Magnaldi - François Borsotto / Buggy Oryx (Diesel)

16th of the stage at 47'49" - 16th overall at 11:55.41 - 3rd of the 2WD category



Already ill yesterday, Thierry Magnaldi had decided not to push today, and to concentrate on holding on to the third place in the two-wheel-drive category for the Oryx Diesel Buggy Oryx. Arriving at the bivouac in 16th position, Thierry had only one wish : to rest and regain some strength for the final straight towards Lima. It was therefore his co-driver, François Borsotto, who looked back over the day's events.

« Thierry has not been in good shape since yesterday. He must have eaten something that disagreed with him, and he is nauseous, which is not nice while you are driving. Moreover, the heat does not help at all. It should be noted that it 40° C in the shade... We started off this morning in the fesh-fesh, behind at least a dozen trucks. Due to the lack of visibility, we got grounded in a pass, just like Isabelle did. There was a real traffic jam, and sometimes the other vehicles nearly touched us. It was very close... We drove for around half the stage with Isabelle, and according to the terrain, either she was ahead or we took the lead. At the top of one crest, she indicated that we should go on, and then, nothing. We did not see her again. We went through all the ergs with no problems. We were driving quite relaxed, and I would say that this was a 'grandad' day... As far as the navigation was concerned, there was nothing significant to note, I would almost say there was no navigation, as there were so many waypoints, even in the dunes. Considering the terrain, ravaged after the first competitors had gone through, I would say that it's a good thing, but it makes the day rather long for the navigators... »

N° 335 Zhou Jihong - Liao Min / Proto Dessoude 05

21st of the stage at 1:17.01 - 18th overall at 17:21.38



Determined to remain as the leading Chinese driver, Zhou Jihong once again set the right pace and finished today in 21st position. The only issued today was a wheel to change at the 180 km mark...

« We were driving well, keeping the right rhythm. Unfortunately, at the 180 km mark, crossing an erg, we came to an area where two cars were stuck. To avoid a collision, I had to turn quite abruptly, and as our tyres were very low on pressure, we lost a tyre. It took us around 15 minutes to change the wheel, and then we got going again, covering the kilometres with no problems until the finish line. We will be careful on the last stage, as even if it is a short one, no-one can guarantee that they will not have a problem. Next stop... Lima! »

N° 320 Isabelle Patissier - Thierry Delli Zotti / Buggy Oryx (Ess)

48th of the stage at 3:19.53 - 27th overall at 21:12.28 - 6th of the 2WD category



Having driven for part of the day with their team-mate, Thierry Magnaldi, Isabelle Patissier and Thierry Delli Zotti saw their progress come to an abrupt halt half-way through the stage, trapped in a depression. A 'spicy' stage for the crew of the Oryx Buggy...

<It was a real nightmare today ! Everything was going well on the first part, until we got stuck in a dip. I really thought we would never get out of that hole. We literally had to fight centimetre after centimetre for two hours. The temperature was very high, and we were exhausted trying to get the Buggy out. We lost time and energy in the fight. The water in the cockpit was so hot that we were hesitant about drinking it. Eventually, some Peruvians came to our assistance, by giving us some cold water and some peach juice. I don't think I have ever drunk anything quite so good !!! The physical effort was very intense during those two hours. To look on the good side, at least it took place today, towards the end of the rally. We already lost one plank yesterday, and we lost the second today. It's definitely time for the 2012 Dakar to finish! "

TODAY'S STAGE





Classement Etape
Leg Classification

Classement Général
Overall Classification

Tomorrow, there will be one last push before the final deliverance, and the overall podium for the event in Lima. Over the final 29 km special stage, full concentration will be necessary in order not to take any risks of spoiling two weeks of intense work.

And then, it will be time to celebrate in the capital city of Peru, where the competitors will surely receive a warm welcome.

CONTACTS

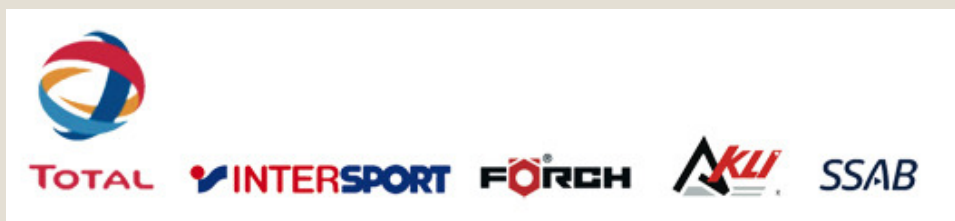
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