



Alfie Cox 18th in a tough Dakar

Alfie Cox and Jürgen Schröder finished 18th overall with their Nissan Overdrive. Before he had to retire halfway through the final week Nani Roma had set an excellent 5th time in the 8th stage between Antofagasta and Copiapo driving a pick-up of the Belgian team.

The 2011 Dakar finished this Saturday 15th January in the same way it had started two weeks earlier: under a storm of cheers and applause by the hundreds of thousands of spectators lining the Buenos Aires roads. The stars and heroes of the mother of all rally-raids certainly deserved this ovation. Out of the three South American versions of the Dakar, the most recent edition was certainly the toughest.

In the Overdrive team only of the four entered cars made it to the finish. It was the former South African biker Alfie Cox who managed this feat, by finishing 18th in the overall rankings.

“After the first week, our four pick-ups were still in the race”, team boss Jean-Marc Fortin states. “But the second half of the Dakar proved to be extremely tough, with very high temperatures, often higher than 40 degrees, and very hard and long stages.”

Nani Roma, who climbed to 9th overall at a certain point, still could set a fifth time however, in the stage towards Copiapo.

“That proves that our cars are still competitive”, Fortin continues. “That was a top-notch performance by Nani, facing the power of the factory teams.”

Unfortunately the former Dakar winner had to retire the next day. A broken diff meant that the Spaniard had to spend quite some time under the leaden sun. Struck by the heat, Nani decided to rejoin the bivouac over the road. Since he also incurred several penalties, Nani not to continue.

Mironenko and Garafulic retired for similar reasons.

“In the dunes of Fiambala you needed a lot of experience to get through the sand without damaging the cars. The engines of Alexander and Boris’s cars overheated. There are not many power plants that can resist a temperature of 120 degrees...”

The Dakar has hardly reached the finishing point, but the Overdrive team is already focussed on a next challenge.

“From 8th to 10th February Yazeed Al-Rajhi competes with one of our pick-ups in the Hail Saudia Baja”, Fortin continues. “In Buenos Aires we completely overhauled Nani Roma’s car before sending it to Belgium by plane. There it will spend another three days in our workshop before it is flown to Saudi Arabia.”