



Team Dessoude



PRESS INFO - DAKAR 2015

Rest day - Iquique (Chile) - 01/12/2015

Catching your breath before the second round...



A rest day is always much appreciated on the Dakar, especially after such a hard marathon stage which saw difficulty after difficulty.

In Iquique, Monday was therefore an opportunity for the crews to sleep, to rest and to chat with the other competitors. A special moment to share with the team as well. A quiet moment for Thierry MAGNALDI, Guy LENEVEU, LIU Kun and LIAO Min to catch their breath before carrying on.

But under the watchful eye of André DESSOUDE, the rest day meant work for the mechanics, getting the vehicles back in shape to face up to the second and final part of the rally, heading to Buenos Aires where the finish of the 38th edition of the Dakar will take place on Saturday.

The Juke Buggy and the Proto N05 have therefore been overhauled and reconditioned in order to get through the remaining five stages. If the cars have been carefully revised, another of Team DESSOUDE vehicles has had a lot of attention over the last two days, namely one of the team's T5 assistance trucks, which has had some bad luck...



Well Done to the Mechanics!

Everything started on Wednesday January 7th around 1 pm, at an altitude of 4300 m, in the heart of the Cordillera of the Andes, 10 km after crossing the Chilean border on a mountain road.

Crossing the border is always a rather delicate thing due to the altitude. Bodies do not always react in the same way, and for many, this is the worst day of the rally. But there is also the traffic to contend with, a long caravan of cars, going on for kilometres. That Wednesday, the competitors, the trucks and even tourists on motorbikes were sharing the same dusty track.

The two Team DESSOUDE trucks found themselves in this procession, climbing the mountain, with the Mercedes in front of the Renault Kerax, totally blind in the dust.



Suddenly, one of the tourist bikes fell down in front of the Mercedes truck. They slammed the brakes on to avoid a catastrophe, but the cloud of dust was so thick that the Kerax could not avoid the collision... None of the six passengers in the two trucks was hurt, with more of a scare than anything, but the two mastodons were immobilised. André DESSOUDE, who was in the front of the caravan, was notified, and he started on the 80 km trek in the opposite direction to find his people.

It was clear that the Kerax was not going anywhere, with no steering, no brakes, no engine cooling... With some effort, it was towed by the Mercedes which was not so badly damaged, to a police station. The passengers were divided between the assistance Patrol car and the second truck to get to Copiapo, 300 km away. Solidarity also played a part, with various other competitors helping to collect the vital parts for that evening's assistance and the minimum number of tools to work.



The next day saw a race against the clock to collect the broken truck and take it to Iquique where, over the next two days, repairs could take place. After many phone calls to all the transport and repair shops in Copiapo, a transporter able to carry a 20 tonne lorry was finally found. Leaving Copiapo on Thursday at around 6 pm, the transporter climbed up into the Andes to collect the Kerax, loading it and finally arriving in Iquique on Saturday at 9 pm after a 1500 km journey.

Getting the truck back was a first victory, but the repairs then had to begin. A mixture of ingenuity and make-do-and-mend, the Wizard of Saint-Lô's mechanics had to find all sorts of solutions by cutting, soldering and replacing everything they could – with no spare parts at all, except for one radiator!

On Sunday, no fewer than seven people spent fifteen hours on the repairs, while the cars were busy with the second part of the marathon stage on their way back from Uyuni. The engine was going, the steering repaired as were the brakes. And today the pedals, the intercooler and the radiator are back in the truck. Team DESSOUDE's Renault Kerax is ready to get going again!

Up to the mechanics who, once again, have worked miracles. Well done. First

hats on to the mechanics who, once again, have worked miracles. Well done, Sirs!



Back to business, direction Calama...

Tomorrow will see the race get going again. The caravan will head south, towards Calama. The special stage will be 471 km long, and could catch some people out, especially the first 50 kilometres of redoubtable sand and dunes. But this will be followed by some rough terrain with bumps and holes which could make progress difficult. The competitors already followed this route in 2014, but in the other direction...



Photos @ DPPI/ G.Deshayes

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