

Dos Hermanas, 20 October 2022

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP LEADERS COME OUT ON TOP

Everyone thought that Nasser Al Attiyah would struggle on the first big day of the Andalucía Rally 2022, but the final result and the way the day unfolded took everyone by surprise. Despite starting behind ten vehicles he won the stage and, in the process, dealt a blow to his rival Sebastien Loeb. Sam Sunderland might not have won on the bikes but he finished a solid second while his W2RC rival Ricky Brabec struggled with both the terrain and the navigation. In T3 and T4 the outsiders showed what they were made of (De Mevius and Gerard Farres both won, both finishing in the top 10 overall in the cars).

ON TRACK

In the bikes class everybody was in agreement – it was a tricky, technical special with slippery tracks and difficult navigation through the olive groves and round the wheat fields. As a function of where they grew up and the kind of terrain they rode as kids, the front runners either loved it or loathed it. **Kevin Benavides (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing)** clearly loved it. **Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing)** was more ‘take it or leave it’ but his carefully considered decision yesterday evening to follow Kevin off the start line paid dividends, especially where the World Championship was concerned. Sam’s friend over at **Monster Energy Honda**, **Adrien van Beveren** admitted the road book’s complexity nearly fried his brain, but he also rose to the challenge. The man who really struggled was the man who really need to go well, Sunderland’s closest challenger for the W2RC top spot, **Ricky Brabec (Monster Energy Honda)**. He lost a heap of time trying to find a waypoint and with speeding penalties... as did **Kevin Benavides**. In the end, both on the stage and overall, **van Beveren** came out on top, ahead of **Sunderland**, with Kevin’s brother Luciano third. In Rally2 **Mason Klein (BAS World KTM Racing)** won, despite a 2-minute penalty, with **Toni Mulec (TS Racing)** second and **Bradley Cox (BAS World KTM Racing)** third. In the quads victory went to Alexandre Giroud with **Jeremy Miroir** again victorious in Rally3.

In the cars it should have been **Sebastien Loeb’s** day, with favourable terrain ahead of him and full confidence in his co-driver. In the end, it didn’t quite work out as planned: first navigation errors and then, once again, the steering of his **BRX Hunter** played up. All this prevented him from fighting for the win, which went comfortably to **Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing)**, who was able to overtake several other competitors on the Andalusian roads he loves so much. At least **Loeb** was able to minimise the damage and finish the day third, behind the **Toyota Overdrive** of **Yazeed Al Rajhi**.

Although **Mathieu Serradori (SRT Motorposrt)** led in T3 over the first part of the stage, in the end victory in the category went to **Guillaume De Mevius (Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team)** who, once again, did not miss his rendez vous with victory. The Belgian had better luck than his team-mates: **Quintero** and **Cristina Gutiérrez** did almost the entire stage without rear brakes on their **OT3s**.

In T4 **Gerard Farres (Can-Am Factory South Racing)** won the stage on his first competitive outing since finishing runner up on the 2022 Dakar.

RADIO BIVOUAC

Michael Burgess is a long way from home. Hailing from the state of Victoria in Australia it would be difficult for him to be any further away from home and he’s been here a while. Before lining up for the start of the **2022 Andalucía Rally** he successfully raced the **Rallye du Maroc** which started at the beginning of the month. So, you’re thinking, he must be a professional rider like **Toby Price** maybe and you’ve never heard of him because he’s just starting out... Quite the opposite, in fact. He’s a middle-aged bloke, all be it a very fit one, living his best life, travelling around

the world doing rallies despite having a successful business back home (he's self-financing...), a wife and three children. And when you talk to Michael you can tell that his family is very important to him, that he is not over here on the other side of the world hiding from them. So what's the story and what's his secret? Well obviously he's very well organised and very passionate about racing rally raid. But he also has a wife who is passionate about sport, in her case marathon running. Which is why, before travelling to Morocco, the whole family went to Germany so that Michael's wife could run the Berlin Marathon. As Michael puts it, "She understands my passion because she has a passion and we support each other's passions. It's what we do." Inevitably a few compromises have to be made. Due to work commitments Michael doesn't think he'll be back on the Dakar before 2025. In meantime he'll be combining occasional W2RC rounds with various marathons around the world.

STAT OF THE DAY: 3, 2, 1

Have a look at the start times and you'll notice that the gap between the competitors is not the same. The first 10 in both the FIA car category and the FIM bike category start every 3 minutes. Then those starting from 10th to 20th place leave every 2 minutes, with the remainder off the line every minute. If you dig out an old Dakar start list from last year you'll see that some bike competitors started 2 every 30 seconds. Part of the charm (and challenge) of rally raid is that essentially you are out on the desert racing against yourself and navigating on your own. People often compare it to racing boats in the ocean. Combine that with the tendency for those starting behind to catch up with those in front and you start to see why there is a gap – to try and keep them apart for as long as possible. Obviously it depends on the terrain, how technical it is and how easy it is to see the tracks of the competitor in front, but typically the first rider is caught up on the special after around the 150 kilometre mark. In a perfect world the gap would be so big that no one saw anyone else all day but when you have hundreds of competitors racing the same route and only so many hours of daylight in day compromises have to be made...

W2RC

Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing) is breathing easier after dominating the first long day of the Andalucía Rally 2022 and, above all, after **Sebastien Loeb (Bahrain Raid Xtreme)** was only able to finish third today in Seville. But... he shouldn't get too excited because, as we have seen today, sometimes the race doesn't turn out as expected. **Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing)** followed his roadmap to the title to the letter: without taking too many risks he has pulled out time on **Ricky Brabec (Monster Energy Honda)**, the man he has to control to win the title. In T3, **'Chaleco' López** won the first battle with **Cristina Gutiérrez**, but they are still very close in the general standings, whilst in T4 **Rokas Baciуска (South Racing Can-Am)** was quicker today than both **Goczal** and **Jones**.

QUOTES

Adrien van Beveren (Monster Energy Honda): "Yesterday David (Castera) said it was going to be easy navigation and it was so difficult. A lot of changes of direction. It was nice, really technical, but the road book fried my brain, really different to riding in the desert. But I enjoyed it a lot. My bike is very good on that kind of terrain, there's a lot of traction when it is slippery. Looking forward to the other days. Its going to long – I'm sure that the navigation is going to be just as difficult as today."

Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing): "Today we decided to attack right from the start and we did a great job, no mistakes. To have done this time is incredible for me. We will try to continue like this, today we won the stage, we scored five points for the championship, we are leaders... The others will push tomorrow, but we will try to manage it. It wasn't easy to overtake, there were three or four Can-Am drivers ahead of us and one of them broke our windscreen, but I didn't take any risks because you have to respect the other competitors".

Sebastien Loeb (Bahrain Raid Xtreme): "It wasn't a problem with the starting position, we had navigation problems. We lost seven minutes looking for a waypoint and that's a long time. Then we just tried to finish, but we also had a problem with the power steering, I could hardly turn in the slow corners and halfway through the stage I thought it was all over. I was able to finish by driving consistently and smoothly. Hopefully tomorrow will be better."



Andalucía = RALLY =



TOMORROW'S PROGRAMME

STAGE 2

Liaison: 314 km / SS: 335 km (52%) / total: 649 km

Malaga, WRC style

David Castera: "The second stage to Malaga has absolutely nothing like the first. The competitors will discover very twisty tracks with climbs, descents, slippery ground and sometimes ravines, almost like WRC at times."

MEDIA CONTENT

Stage 1B photos and quotes of the day

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/08o9ryjy8jsixtw/AADu46zysMdo4eotY2fgBiPca?dl=0>

Videos :

<https://e1.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZTNv8ZcjI4TdQGtG4tIHKJkMCqc0uGU58X>

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Websites

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EDITION

