

Dakar 2016, stage 7: Iveco closes in on the lead in the general classification

Federico Villagra's flat tire at the end of the stage and Ton Van Genugten's decision to help replace it, left Iveco without a victory in the special. However, the brand moved up to 2nd place in the general thanks to the team's leader, the Dutchman Gerard de Rooy.

Turin, 10 January 2016

The Dakar Rally returned to Argentine soil in Stage 7, which ended on Saturday afternoon, prior to the day of rest in the city of Salta this Sunday. Part of the route was altered and cut short for Bikes and Quads due to heavy storms and a swell in the river at kilometer 350, but, fortunately, the Cars and Trucks were able to complete the entire timed special.

Federico Villagra once again appeared to be one of the top competitors, with great times in the first parts of yesterday's special, which left from Uyuni, crossed the border to Argentina and ended in the city of Salta. The local pilot was in first or second place during almost the entire day, exchanging the lead with his teammate Ton van Genugten.

Everything made it look as though they would take 1st and 2nd place for Iveco in this stage, but with just a few kilometers to go, Federico Villagra's Iveco Powerstar got a flat tire and he had to stop. With great team spirit and sacrificing an almost sure win, Ton van Genugten stopped his Iveco Trakker to help Villagra and both were eventually able to reach the finish line. The Dutchman came in 9 minutes behind Eduard Nikolaev, the winner of the day, while the Argentine finished 13 minutes behind the leader and was bumped out of the Top 5 of a general classification for trucks that is very close.

Gerard de Rooy was Iveco's top pilot in stage 7, coming in 4th place with his Powerstar. He managed to cross the finish line 2 minutes and 11 seconds after Nikolaev, even though he made a navigational error that cost him between 40 and 50 seconds. Thanks also to Stacey and Villagra's delays, the winner of the 2012 edition now holds 2nd place in the general, just 5 minutes and 31 seconds behind the leader, Pieter Versluis.

"It's great to finish the first week like this, especially since the first week included a lot of WRC sections, which aren't my strong point. I hope to have a good second week, with the dune stretches. I have a lot of faith in my truck," said Gerard de Rooy, the pilot of Iveco Powerstar #501.

Pep Vila had another good day in his ongoing fight to place within the Top 10. He completed today's stage 9 minutes and 16 seconds after the winner, putting him in 12th place in the general. He is now 1 hour 26 minutes and 7 seconds behind the leader, Versluis, but just 32 seconds from the Top 10.

Stage 7 – Trucks

1. Nikolaev (RUS), Kamaz – 3:54:31
2. Mardeev (RUS), Kamaz – plus 58 seconds
3. Versluis (NLD), MAN – plus 1 minute 17 seconds
- 4. GERARD DE ROOY (NLD), IVECO – plus 2 minutes 11 seconds**
5. Mardeev (RUS), Kamaz – plus 6 minutes 44 seconds
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- 6. TON VAN GENUGTEN (NLD), IVECO – plus 9 minutes 8 seconds**
- 10. FEDERICO VILLAGRA (ARG), IVECO – plus 13 minutes 46 seconds**
- 13. PEP VILA (SPA), IVECO – plus 18 minutes 16 seconds**
- ALEŠ LOPRAIS (CZE), IVECO – dropped out**

General Classification – Trucks

1. Versluis (NLD), MAN – 17:05:09
- 2. GERARD DE ROOY (NLD), IVECO – plus 5 minutes 31 seconds**
3. Mardeev (RUS), Kamaz – plus 10 minutes 48 seconds
4. Nikolaev (RUS), Kamaz – plus 10 minutes 54 seconds
5. Stacey (NLD), MAN – plus 11 minutes 28 seconds
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- 6. FEDERICO VILLAGRA (ARG), IVECO – plus 15 minutes 35 seconds**
- 7. TON VAN GENUGTEN (NLD), IVECO – plus 29 minutes 0 seconds**
- 12. PEP VILA (SPA), IVECO – plus 1 hour 26 minutes 7 seconds**
- ALEŠ LOPRAIS (CZE), IVECO – dropped out**

To learn more about Iveco's teams and vehicles and to follow Iveco day-by-day throughout the race, visit www.iveco.com/dakar

Iveco

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The brand's wide range of products include the Daily, a vehicle that covers the 3 – 7 ton vehicle weight segment, the Eurocargo from 6 – 19 tons, the Trakker (dedicated to off-road missions) and the Stralis, both over 16 tons. In addition, the Iveco Astra brand builds off-road trucks, rigid and articulated dumpers as well as special vehicles.

Iveco employs close to 21,000 individuals globally. It manages production sites in 7 countries throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America where it produces vehicles featuring the latest advanced technologies. 4,200 sales and service outlets in over 160 countries guarantee technical support wherever an Iveco vehicle is at work.

For further information about Iveco: www.iveco.com

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