

Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson: Difficult stage with many losses Team France extends lead in the overall standings

The Frenchmen win their first special stage at the Transsyberia Rally 2008. Additional teams have to pay tribute to the harshness of the Transsyberia and retire. 60 penalty minutes for Schwarz.

The teams have been already on the way for twelve strenuous days. The Transsyberia has left its mark on human and machine. The remaining teams had to manage the 280 km long special stage from Mankhan to Darvi. Sun at the start and the finish. Inbetween a heavy rain front. While the blue skies still attracted racy speeds on the level stretches, the foot had to be taken off the gas after severe rains. The result was an absolutely rally-worthy special stage.

Darvi, July 21st, 2008.

Armin Schwarz, Pilot of Team Germany 1, believed in a diurnal victory shortly after crossing the finish line. "It went well for us. We had no problems navigating." But two punctures cost valuable time. "When we put the car-jack in place during the second tire change, we realized that something was wrong with the car. In the last section we kept on touching down." The team crossed the finish line on the wheel rim, with a torn up right front tire. "Our mechanics will fix the car now and then we'll be off again tomorrow", said Schwarz. The appraisal of the board cards turned out though, that Team Germany 1 had missed some of the checkpoints on the stretch and therefore received a time penalty of 60 minutes. That resulted in the 11th place in the overall standings.

The leaders in the overall standings, the Frenchmen Christian Lavieille and Francois Borsotto came in shortly after Schwarz. Their Porsche Cayenne S Transsyberia was in good condition, as it had been throughout the past days. In the last third of the rally, Team France advances to the hunted candidate for the victory. From the first leg on they continuously drove into the front ranks and captured their first victory in a special stage. Lavieille is aware that the competition is watching him closely now. "We have no special tactic for tomorrow's stage. We'll try to stay together with the group around Armin, Pedro and Pau, but we don't want to take any risks."

Team Portuguese with Pedro Gameiro and Pedro Figueiredo landed in second place with a lag of 4:15 minutes. "The weather conditions, especially the rain during the last 15 kilometers, made the stretch a lot more difficult than we thought. Loads of puddles and bumps. But we did come in second and are second overall too. We want to make up some time during the long stage tomorrow", Pedro Gameiro said confidently.

The young Team USA is gathering more and more momentum and came in third today. Together with his navigator Colin Godby, Ryan Millen, son of last year's winner Rod Millen, mastered the demanding stretch brilliantly and crossed the finish line with a lag of 9:03 minutes to the day's winners.

For the first time in the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson, a crew pressed the emergency button, which is installed in every car for urgent distress. The Suzuki/Maxi Team, with

Melina Frey and Alexandra Hahn, reacted quickly when they watched a vehicle roll over several times. They sounded the distress-signal and assisted on the spot. Wet grooves in the steppe proved the undoing of the Swiss Team Desert Fox during a passing maneuver. The pilot lost control of his Mitsubishi Pajero. Aurele Bachmann as well as co-pilot Damien Blanke were not hurt, but the vehicle was totaled.

The difficult demands of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson took their toll on additional teams. Thus, the Chinese Team Porsche CN and the Team Lybia-Rally-Raid with Wolfgang Pasetti in a Toyota Landcruiser J9 will not be continuing. How many of the remaining teams will start into the next leg will be determined at short notice. Repairs have to be done on several vehicles overnight, as long as these are actually possible.

Interim daily standings for the Transsyberia Rally 2008, 10th of 14 stages, Mankhan – Darvi

1. Lavieille/Borso	Team France	Porsche	03:17:58 hrs.
2. Gameiro/Figueiredo	Team Portuguese	Porsche	00:04:15 hrs. lag
3. Millen/Godby	Team USA	Porsche	00:09:03
4. Celma/Unger	Team Germany 2	Porsche	00:13:55
5. Soler/Peinado	Team Spain	Porsche	00:14:12
6. Abdulla/Lutteri	Team Qatar	Porsche	00:32:05
7. Kern/van Kan	Team Germany 3	Porsche	00:32:57
8. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	00:36:03
9. Watson/Morley	Team Oz	Porsche	00:41:47
10. Kern/Binder	Team Pro	Porsche	00:46:37

Overall standings – as of July 21st, 2008

1. Lavieille/Borso	Team France	Porsche	12:27:56 hrs.
2. Gameiro/Figueiredo	Team Portuguese	Porsche	00:51:03 hrs. lag
3. Schwarz/Schulz	Team Germany 1	Porsche	02:16:39
4. Soler/Peinado	Team Spain	Porsche	02:31:08
5. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	03:13:38
6. Abdulla/Lutteri	Team Qatar	Porsche	03:19:27
7. Millen/Godby	Team USA	Porsche	03:24:23
8. Kern/van Kan	Team Germany 3	Porsche	03:47:30
9. Celma/Unger	Team Germany 2	Porsche	04:28:12
10. Baier/Steinbring	Teambuctou	Toyota	05:34:50

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<http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/en/presstart/pressphotos/>.

Which team is in which position? What's the up-to-date course of the stages? You can follow each team of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 closely on the screen via the Live Tracker at <http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/en/route/live-trackingen/>.

The Transsyberia Rally 2008 can be followed from the perspective of the participants in a daily photo blog at www.transsyberia-rallye.com. The teams are recording their personal impressions and experiences with the new water- and dirt resistant Sony Ericsson C702 Cyber-shot-cell phone.

TV and Online

REBEL Media accompanies the teams for the entire rally with a TV production crew and records the rally events in HD quality. Daily news feeds, rough cuts and video clips are guaranteed and downloadable via FTP server. We'll be happy to supply you with additional details upon request.

You'll find daily updated information, as well as downloadable text material of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson at:

<http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/de/presse/> (German)

<http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/en/presstart/> (English)

REBEL Media GmbH

Claudia Rickmann

Holzstrasse 28-30 • D 80469 Munich

T: +49 (0)89.2000 347 15

F: +49 (0)89.2000 347 29

M: +49 (0)170.958 23 42

rickmann@rebel-media.de