

Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson: Team France wins competently A brilliant 2nd place for Team Spain and a disappointed Armin Schwarz in 3rd position.

One last run, one last special stage, one last challenge. That was the parameter for the participants of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson on this final summer's day. After only 368 kilometers more of navigation, steering and acceleration, Ulaanbaatar is reached. The morning program of the last leg contained a fast special stage of 85 km length. It was about the victory in the final special stage of the Transsyberia 2008, as well as the top placements in the overall standings. The teams in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th place were close together. The narrow intervals brought suspense to the event.

Ulaanbaatar, July 25th, 2008

After yesterday's victory, Team Spain started first, followed by 20 additional teams in minute intervals. The Spaniards were the hunted, especially by Team Germany 1, Schwarz/Schulz. That made Pau Soler nervous. "To sweep the stretch wasn't easy for us." Armin Schwarz, in contrast, knew that he had only one chance for second place in the overall standings, after yesterday's time loss: he had to utilize his addiction to speed. The result: Second fastest in the final trial, ahead of Team Russia 1 (6 minutes behind) and sixfold stage winner in the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson, a record. With 170 km/h (106 mph) he basically flew past the nine cars, which started before him and exhibited what his navigator and his car are capable of. "Fortunately the stretch was only 85 km and not 120 km long, or Armin Schwarz would probably have caught up to us", Pau Soler said calmly. Team Spain crossed the finish-line first, was third in this trial. After 7200 kilometers, Team Spain and Team Germany 1 were only 6 minutes apart in the final settlement. Incredibly close for a marathon rally! With a lag of 9 minutes, Team Portuguese arrived fourth, Team Germany 2 landed in 5th position. The French Christian Lavieille and Francois Borsotto ended the special stage in sixth place and confidently defended the lead in the overall standings. Others still had to thoroughly concentrate, since only one part of the long day was over.

A liaison of 75 km followed, before the last segment of the rally finally began. Eleven kilometers through winding, hilly off-road terrain and a spectacular crossing of the Tuul Gol River. Team France drove across the finish-line ahead of Team Spain. The Danner Racing Team followed in third, not by land as planned though, but afloat in the fast river, from which Christof Danner could free his Mercedes G 320 only narrowly. "That wasn't a show, but real work. We navigated wrong and before we knew it, the water had carried us away." The result of this final special stage didn't count individually, but was incorporated into the overall time. Consequently, the drivers had an adequate terrain to show their abilities playfully without taking lots of risks and to fully express their joy about having reached the destination Ulaanbaatar in their off-road vehicles. After crossing the finish-line, the relief was written on everyone's face, which were marked by the exertions of the past 15 days. Happiness, relief, and sometimes disappointment – but all with the wish for a shower.

During their Transsyberia premiere, Team France with Christian Lavieille and Francois Borsotto crowned themselves the big winner. Their overall time was 27:13:27 hours. "We're super happy that we won and want to thank Porsche France for making our participation possible. The Transsyberia is something special. Many different stages for driver and navigator. The Transsyberia is *magique*", beamed pilot Christian Lavieille, who maneuvered his Porsche Cayenne S Transsyberia securely, fast and with little wear through valleys and over mountains, through swamps and across steppe."

Team Spain captured the second place in the overall standings in 29:28:53 hours. Navigator Laia Paneido was beside herself with happiness: "I can't believe it yet and I didn't dare hope for it either." Driver Pau Soler was also visibly pleased with the outcome: "I am totally happy. Before the rally, we resolved to be at least as good as last year, when we were fifth. That was difficult, because the Transsyberia had ten very good teams this time, which were all capable of driving in the front. The standard was much higher than in 2007. That we're now second, ahead of Armin Schwarz, is excellent." Team Spain would like to come back again next year and face the challenges of the diverse terrains.

Armin Schwarz and Andi Schulz, Team Germany 1 landed in third place. "The key to our success was that we drove fast continuously. Damage can occur quickly, as we experienced yesterday. That's why it's

important to always keep at it and never give up“, analyzed pilot Armin Schwarz, who lost 2.5 hours due to time penalties and damage alone.

Team Portuguese with Pedro Gameiro and co-driver Pedro Figueiredo, who had been leading for a long time while in Russia, reached a brilliant 4th place in the overall standings. Pilot Gameiro gave a positive review: “The long stages in Mongolia got to us. We took part in the Transsyberia for the first time and didn’t have any experience. In addition, Pedro and I drove as a team for the first time. It worked out really well! With the Spaniards and us, Porsche Iberica has two teams in the Top 4. We’re proud of it.”

After 15 days, 14 stages, 12 special stages and 7200 kilometers, 21 of the 34 teams, who originally set out, reached Ulaanbaatar. In the Mongolian capital everyone will celebrate a lavish party together, toast the winners and make plans for 2009, when the Transsyberia Rally will set off once more on July 24th, 2009.

Daily standings Transsyberia Rally 2008, FINAL July 25th, Mongol Els – Ulaanbaatar

1. Schwarz/Schulz	Team Germany 1	Porsche	00:54:53 hrs.
2. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	00:06:00 hrs. lag
3. Soler/Peinado	Team Spain	Porsche	00:07:15
4. Gameiro/Figueiredo	Team Portuguese	Porsche	00:09:00
5. Celma/Unger	Team Germany 2	Porsche	00:09:25
6. Lavieille/Borsotto	Team France	Porsche	00:10:47
7. Kramer/Ettenberger	Suzuki/SPOX.COM	Suzuki	00:13:03
8. Danner/Szekeres	Danner Racing Team	Mercedes	00:13:25
9. Szustkowski/Kazberuk	STT Racing/Poland 2	Porsche	00:14:38
10. Pfeil-Schneider/Steuer	Colombian Arrow	Porsche	00:15:37

Overall standings – FINAL - July 25th, 2008

1. Lavieille/Borsotto	Team France	Porsche	27:13:27 hrs.
2. Soler/Peinado	Team Spain	Porsche	02:15:25 hrs. lag
3. Schwarz/Schulz	Team Germany 1	Porsche	02:21:14
4. Gameiro/Figueiredo	Team Portuguese	Porsche	02:54:36
5. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	03:53:15
6. Celma/Unger	Team Germany 2	Porsche	08:18:55
7. Baier/Steinbring	Teambuctou	Toyota	09:49:40
8. Pfeil-Schneider/Steuer	Colombian Arrow	Porsche	10:59:13
9. Szustkowski/Kazberuk	STT Racing/Poland 2	Porsche	13:19:33
10. Ogawa/Kaneko	Team Japan	Porsche	21:52:18

Overall standings categories– FINAL - July 25th, 2008

Category 1B	1. Danner/Szekeres	Danner Racing Team	Mercedes
Category 1C	1. Lavieille/Borsotto	Team France	Porsche
Category 2A	1. Kramer/Ettenberger	Suzuki/SPOX.COM	Suzuki
Category 2B	1. Baier/Steinbring	Teambuctou	Toyota

Spectacular images, free of charge: <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/>.

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