

Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson: Team Middle East takes the lead in the overall standings

Team Portuguese loses the lead in the overall standings to Team Middle East. Schwarz secures the third daily victory for himself and Team Germany 1.

Novosibirsk, July 17th, 2008.

The twofold Middle East Rally Champion Said Rashid Al Hajri and his co-pilot Tim Trenker displaced the Portuguese, who had been leading in the overall standings since the beginning, and moved to the top. Team Middle East experienced some nerve-racking moments after crossing the finish-line. "We knew we'd been really fast and that we'd performed great and we expressed our happiness about it too. At the finish-line checkpoint we were supposed to have our board card stamped, but we couldn't find it. We turned the entire car upside down. Nothing. Then Tim dismantled his baseboard: the card had slipped into a little crevice behind it. Fortunately we have it again and can now tackle the missions in Mongolia as the leaders", Al Hajri described the situation excitedly in the evening.

For the third time during the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson Team Germany 1 was the fastest en route. They hightailed to victory in 51:21 minutes. That was a nice present Armin Schwarz gave himself for his 45th birthday with the support of his navigator Andi Schulz. Second place went to the French Christian Lavieille and Francois Borsotto with 55:35. Denis Levyatov and Sergey Talantsev from Team Porsche Russia 1 came in third in 57:39 minutes. In the overall standings, there are only 1:36 minutes between the leading teams, Middle East and France.

Team Italia had to retire from the Transsyberia Rally 2008. Antonio Tognana and his co-pilot Carlo Cassina drove too fast over a bump. Subsequently Tognana complained of back pain. The Italian received first-aid treatment in the hospital in Novosibirsk and is transported home with a suspected vertebra injury.

The program for the upcoming stage has changed. The special test has been canceled, since the rally's physician will be attending to Tognana until the transfer to the airplane and wouldn't be able to be back in time for the evaluation test. The 7th stage from Novosibirsk to Kosh Agash will therefore be a clear transfer stage. Near the Mongolian border, the teams will be spending the night outside for the first time during the Transsyberia Rally 2008.

The 6th stage of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson began in Omsk and proceeded across almost 700 kilometers to Novosibirsk, the best known station of the Transsyberian Railroad and the capital of Siberia. The route was level and fast and led across dry grounds, lined with swampy grasslands and isolated groves. The 78 km long special stage demanded full concentration from the teams. Some of the biggest challenges was the dust which was stirred up by other vehicles and navigating the back-country of Novosibirsk.

 Daily standings Transsyberia Rally 2008, 6th of 14 stages, Omsk – Novosibirsk

1. Schwarz/Schulz	Team Germany 1	Porsche	0:51:21 hrs.
2. Lavieille/Borsotta	Team France	Porsche	0:04:14 hrs. behind
3. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	0:06:18
4. Al Hajri/Trenker	Team Middle East	Porsche	0:06:35
5. Kern/Binder	Team Pro	Porsche	0:07:24
6. Abdulla/Lutteri	Team Qatar	Porsche	0:08:22
7. Millen/Godby	Team USA	Porsche	0:09:14
8. Kern/van Kan	Team Germany 3	Porsche	0:10:37
9. Soler/Peinado	Team Spain	Porsche	0:12:24
10. Celma/Unger	Team Germany 2	Porsche	0:13:10

Overall standings – as of July 16th, 2008

1. Al Hajri/Trenker	Team Middle East	Porsche	4:15:19 hrs.
2. Lavieille/Borsotta	Team France	Porsche	0:01:36 hrs. behind
3. Kern/van Kan	Team Germany 3	Porsche	0:08:26
4. Gameiro/Figueiredo	Team Portugal	Porsche	0:24:46
5. Schwarz/Schulz	Team Germany 1	Porsche	0:26:35
6. Levyatov/Talantsev	Team Russia 1	Porsche	1:08:32
7. Pfeil-Schneider/Steuer	Colombian Arrow	Porsche	1:40:16
8. Abdulla/Lutteri	Team Qatar	Porsche	1:55:49
9. Millen/Godby	Team USA	Porsche	2:17:50
10. Baier/Steinbring	Teambuctou	Toyota	2:19:54

Free, up-to-date images for editorial use are available at:

<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