



ROADBOOK D4 PRICE TAKES THE OVERALL LEAD, EKSTROM WINS THE STAGE

In the bikes RallyGP victory once again went to **Tosha Schareina** (Honda Team) with **Toby Price** (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) taking the overall lead. In Rally2 it was **Romain Dumontier** (Team Dumontier Racing) who was fastest with **Bradley Cox** (BAS World KTM Racing) still leading overall. In Rally3 **Cheikh-Yves Jacquemain** (Africa Rallye Team) won once again, while in the quads **Manuel Andujar** (Drag'on Rally Team) takes yet another win to shore up his overall lead.

In the cars, victory went to **Mattias Ekstrom** (Audi Sport) while overall it was still **Nasser Al Attiyah** (Toyota Gazoo Racing) in the lead. In T3, **Mitch Guthrie** (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA by BFG) was forced to retire from the stage with 'Chaleco' **Lopez** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) taking the win. Overall, **Seth Quintero** (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA by BFG) maintains his advantage. In T4, it was once again the American **Sara Price** (South Racing Can-Am) who took the win. Overall, her team-mate **Joao Ferreira** retains the lead. In the trucks, **Martin Macik** (MM Technology) wins the stage to extend his overall lead.

ON TRACK

In the bikes **Tosha Schareina** continues to push in an attempt to recover the time he lost on Stage 1 and by winning today's loop around Zagora he is now in 5th place and just 08'52" behind new overall leader **Toby Price**. Second on the stage, the Australian has become virtual W2RC leader, with his rival for the championship **Luciano Benavides** (Husqvarna Factory Racing) currently 4th overall, trailing by 08'48". Yesterday's overall leader **Ross Branch** (Hero MotoSports) slips to second place at 04'46". Third on the stage was **Tosha's** teammate '**Nacho**' **Cornejo** at 03'46". In Rally2 it was **Romain Dumontier** who took the honours 01'06" ahead of **Jean-Loup Lèpan** (Duust Diverse Racing) with **Michael Docherty** (BAS World KTM Racing) just behind in third at 01'25". Overall **Bradley Cox** maintains the lead 07'40" ahead of **Dumontier** with **Docherty** in third at 17'07". In Rally3 victory went once again to **Cheikh-Yves Jacquemain** ahead of **Ardit Kurtaj** (Xraids Experience) at 03'13" with **Richard Hodola** third at 17'29". Overall **Jacquemain** leads the Hungarian by 51'15" with **Kurtaj** third at 1h05'51". Last but not least, in the quads **Manuel Andujar** continues to dominate, beating **Juraj Varga** (Varga Motorsport Team) by 06'37" and **Alexandre Giroud** (Team Giroud) by 13'36".

In the car category, after **Nasser Al Attiyah's** back-to-back wins on stages 1 and 2 it was prologue winner **Mattias Ekstrom** who took the stage of the day. The Swede won by just 6" over the Qatari and 14" over **Sébastien Loeb** (BRX). **Carlos Sainz** (Audi Sport) suffered a technical problem. Overall, **Al Attiyah** retains the lead, **Loeb** is now in 2nd place at 6'16" ahead of **Yazeed Al Rajhi** (Overdrive Racing) at 6'59". **Stéphane Peterhansel** (Audi Sport) is 4th just under 20 minutes behind. There were major upsets in the T3s: **Mitchel Guthrie**, 2nd overall this morning and leader of the W2RC standings after Agadir, was forced to retire from the stage due to a mechanical problem. **Eryk Goczal** (BBR) also suffered the same fate, for the second day running (see *Radio Bivouac*). It was **Michal Goczal** (BBR) who set the fastest time, but who is now facing a 50-hour penalty for having changed his engine last night. **Chaleco Lopez** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) was the day's winner. In the general standings, **Seth Quintero**, 2nd this morning, takes over the lead despite a lowly 6th place today. **Marek Goczal** is 2nd at 4'27" and **Austin Jones** (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA by BFG) is 3rd at 9'11". In T4, **Sara Price** repeated yesterday's victory, ahead of her team-mate **Joao Ferreira**. Overall, the Portuguese driver remains in first place, 5'37" ahead of **Juan Manuel Mana** (Automode E) and **Price**, who has moved up to third in the rankings, 11'28" behind the leader. In the trucks the battle between **Martin Macik** and **Janus van Kasteren** (Boss Machinery Team De Rooy) continues. Today it was the Czech who won. He leads the Dutchman overall by 1h33'38".

RADIO BIVOUAC

Running into **Eryk Goczal** in the bivouac is always a pleasure. Polite, articulate and surprisingly modest, the 18-year-old is above all passionate about a sport for which he has extraordinary talent. The youngest winner in the history of the Dakar, the Pole has been absent from the W2RC since January, concentrating on his final exams.

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Recently enrolled at university, he only spent two days there before flying off to the Rallye du Maroc, where he won the prologue and the first stage in T3! Apparently, his university supports his passion and will allow him to take part in the W2RC next year. But his ambition is clearly to move up to the T1 class as soon as possible. And **Eryk** is not alone in having this ambition. Some T3 drivers will have the opportunity to test the best T1+s of the moment at the end of stage 5. A brand new FIA W2RC initiative dubbed Next Gen Tryouts is scheduled for 4pm after the finish of the race. A 17 km loop from the bivouac that will allow **Mitchel Guthrie**, **Seth Quintero**, **Cristina Gutierrez**, **Dania Akeel**, and **Rokas Baciуска** to show off their skills behind the wheel of cars from BRX, Toyota, M-Sport NWM Ford, X-raid and South Racing. Others didn't have to wait long to make their mark. **Pau Navarro** (FN Speed) and **Grégoire de Mévius** (Overdrive Racing) are both entered in Hilux T1+s on the 24th Rallye du Maroc, which is also destined to be the breeding ground for the discipline!

STAT OF THE DAY: 3

The new BF Goodrich KDR 3 tyre made its debut on the Rallye du Maroc this week on the T1+ cars (37 -12.5 x 17). In a bid to reduce the number of tyres transported on races, the FIA has decided to reduce the choice of tyres from 2 to 1 for Platinum and Gold teams. BFG was immediately attracted by the ecological impact of this decision and in partnership with the leading teams, has developed the new rally-raid benchmark. Since Agadir, BRX, Toyota and Audi have been equipped with the KDR 3, which takes over from the KDR 2. Gone are the two options, S (Soft) and M (Medium). More versatile, with slightly wider tread spacing for better evacuation, version 3 of the KDR has a reinforced sidewall. And it's this that has enabled it to boast some excellent puncture statistics so far. This has often been a major issue in previous rounds of the W2RC, with so far Toyota reporting zero punctures for **Al Attiyah** and **Al Rajhi** Hiluxs, for example, after three days of racing in Morocco, the world's leading producer of gravel! BFG's technical team, which has been working alongside the teams throughout the season, was looking forward to today's stage, which had a less sandy profile than the other stages, as a litmus test to validate their work. Commented **Sébastien Loeb** at BRX: *"No punctures for us yet. In the past, I used to get punctures and most of the time without knowing why, which was really frustrating. I'm still paying attention to the tyres, but we're in attack mode and so far, no worries, so I think we've made a real step forward. The sidewalls are a little harder and the car seems a little firmer, but we've worked on the suspension and I think that overall it's a good improvement."*

W2RC

Toby Price is dead set on fighting **Luciano Benavides** for the title until the last metre! The man from Oz was the fastest W2RC entrant today, leapfrogging **Ross Branch** and **Pablo Quintanilla** (Monster Energy Honda) to seize the lead while the Argentinian remained stuck in fifth place. Moreover, Price is now the virtual championship leader: he started the race 9 points down and has already gained 13 on Benavides. An epic showdown beckons from now until the finish!

Romain Dumontier won the Rally2 special with 1'06" in hand over **Jean-Loup Lèpan** (Dust Diverse Racing). **"Dudu"**, the W2RC leader and second in the rally, behind **Bradley Cox**, struck gold today, extending his buffer over **Paolo Lucci** (BAS World KTM Racing), his rival for the title, to 11'16". **Cheikh-Yves Jacquemain** won the stage and cemented his overall lead in Rally3. **Ardit Kurtaj** (Xraids Experience) is home and dry after **Massimo Camurri** (McDonald's Rally) withdrew from the race. **Manuel Andújar** still dominates the quad race ahead of **Juraj Varga**. The W2RC leader, **Laisvydas Kancius** (Story Racing), ran into mechanical trouble.

In the FIA competition, **Mattias Ekström**, clinched the stage win and **Sébastien Loeb** moved up to second place in the rally, behind **Nasser Al Attiyah**. As it stands, the Frenchman would make up his 8-point deficit to **Juan Cruz Yacopini** in the battle for third place in the championship. The Argentinian, currently sixth, has two days to try and turn the tables.

In a dramatic turn of events, the W2RC leader in T3, **Mitch Guthrie**, succumbed to mechanical problems. His teammates, **Austin Jones** and **Seth Quintero**, were 3 and 9 points back, which means **Quintero** is now in control of the rally and the virtual championship lead, with **Jones** third in the race! Nothing will be certain before the last special. **João Ferreira** beat **Sebastián Guayasamín** (FN Speed) by a nose's width in T4. The Portuguese driver, a whopping 2 h 26'24" ahead of **Rebecca Busi** (FN Speed) in the overall, seems assured of victory. **Martin Macik** and **Janus van Kasteren** continued their virtuoso performances in T5. The Czech leader of the rally is cranking up the pressure on the Dutchman, with just 11 points separating the two juggernauts in the championship.

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On the sidelines with his wrist injury, the Dakar winner is following the rally from the bivouac and gives us his daily analysis of the bike race:

"The race started with **Matthias Walkner's** crash. I was at the start of the stage and I saw it happen. The stage was very fast, with an average speed of over 100 km/h. It was also demanding because there were some big rocks. There was a great battle between the riders who started at the front, who were close on time and for whom it came down to the bonuses. Overall, my brother is 4th, but for the next couple of days he's going to have to attack because where he is now he doesn't benefit from the bonuses".

QUOTES

Toby Price (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing)

"The 330 kays went pretty quickly, the average speed was a lot faster. It was really rocky but the bike's been good. We're just trying to stay in the fight and do our best. I'm obviously not in top form (his voice is very hoarse) but as long as I'm in with a chance of winning the world championship I won't give up. At the moment the bonuses are giving us an advantage but of course to benefit from them you have to take the risk of riding out in front and navigating."

Tosha Schareina (Monster Energy Honda)

"We had a difficult mission today to try and open the stage and I pushed hard again the whole special. From the start to refuelling was really good. But then I had a problem with my road book reader and had to wind it on by hand for the last 90 kays. I still haven't recovered all the 20 minutes we lost on the first day but we'll try again tomorrow."

Mattias Ekstrom (Team Audi Sport)

"We had a good prologue so that was an encouraging start to the rally. Then on the first days we made some navigation mistakes. Yesterday was looking good and then we had a puncture and some technical issues towards the end and then today we won, so we're obviously very happy with that. Tomorrow we'll open but in this sport I think what we all dream about is opening stages. I'm looking forward to that challenge tomorrow."

Stéphane Peterhansel (Team Audi Sport)

"We're using the Rallye du Maroc to try out different suspension settings, in particular to match them up with the new tyres, because there's nothing better than a race for setting-up a car. For the moment, we're not entirely satisfied with the set-up and the pace up front is fast. Since the Dakar, we've only done one day's racing at the Baja Aragon. To be honest, we're short on driving time. On top of that, Edouard's broken back from the Dakar was a bit of a worry. We're not on the pace, but that's more down to us than the car. In any case, it's good to get some miles in."

PROGRAMME

> October 17: Stage 4 - Zagora-Merzouga (Liaison: 78 km / Special stage: 343 km / Total: 421 km)

> October 18: Stage 5 - Merzouga-Merzouga (Liaison: 3 km / Special stage: 152 km / Total: 155km)

> 18 October evening: Rallye du Maroc and W2RC prize-giving ceremonies

*GMT +1

Best of photos, press release, quotes :

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Programme news :

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