



Dakar 2012, Stage 3

San Rafael - San Juan

563 km in total, 270 km special test

Hell of stones followed by podium!

Paulo Goncalves lived up to his promise and attacked at today's stage three of the Dakar 2012. The Portuguese member of the Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain finished third during an extremely difficult Andes stage from San Rafael to San Juan. Goncalves improved dramatically to seventh place in the standings.

It was a race day like hardly ever before in Dakar history. Some at the bivouac even called it "Erzberg"-like. The course offered extreme stone passages and navigation was tricky also. Coming from 21st position, Paulo Goncalves' error-free ride was rewarded with a podium result and a leap into the top ten.

Joan Barreda also wanted to fire a warning. The Spaniard followed race leader Marc Coma in the opening minutes, but crashed at Km 20 and had to fight back with a damaged navigation device. Nevertheless he managed to re-join the title holder. But bad luck happened again a few kilometres from the finish. Barreda's chain jumped off and jammed the drivetrain. It took him a while to fix the problem, the team newcomer eventually lost 41 minutes.

Zé Hélio meanwhile rode a solid race and ended the day near the Top 20. "I never experienced a day like this," the Brazilian said. "It was the most extreme and technical stuff I've ever ridden." While Jose Manuel Pellicer came home inside the Top 30, Ike Klaumann crashed and injured himself. The race is over for the likeable Brazilian.

Wednesday's programme is expected to be difficult and long again. The total distance from San Juan to Chilecito is over 700 km, 326 of them being a special test. The scenic Rioja canyons will demand good navigational skills.





1. Cyril Despres (FRA) KTM, 3:48:38 Std
2. Frans Verhoeven (NEL) Sherco, 8:37 min behind
3. Paulo Goncalves (POR) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 8:39
4. Helder Rodrigues (POR) Yamaha, 10:03
5. Alain Duclos (FRA) Aprilia, 11:12
22. Zé Hélio (BRA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 29:15
30. Jose Manuel Pellicer (SPA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 33:15
34. Joan Barreda (SPA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 41:24

Overall standings

1. Despres 7:31:42 hrs
2. Marc Coma (SPA) KTM, 10:12 min behind
3. David Casteu (FRA) Yamaha, 17:16
4. Francisco Lopez (CHI) Aprilia, 17:37
7. Paulo Goncalves (POR) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 26:00
20. Joan Barreda (SPA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 46:48
22. Zé Hélio (BRA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 47:30
33. Jose Manuel Pellicer (SPA) Husqvarna Rallye Team by Speedbrain, 1:06:54

more information: <http://racing.speedbrain.de>

