



Versluis finally gets even and wins; Hans and Gerard hardly lose any time.

“Again we had our portion of bad luck, just like yesterday. There was a lot more to lose than to win. Already after 20 km’s our windscreen broke and it was really breathing in the dust, in the literal and figurative sense. After that we went alright for a while but after about 120 km’s a number of Mini’s passed, followed by de SMG of Sainz and the HAVAL of Lavieille. Than it really became a hell”, tells Gerard. Tom adds: “I don’t have to eat tonight, I swallowed a kilo of sand, now I know to appreciate a windscreen.”

It was a short Special of 156 from Tucumán to Salta, which will be followed by a well-deserved rest day. We knew that the hard gravel and the rocky soil wouldn’t make a lot of difference in the total rankings, on the condition that we would take it easy.

This became truth at the finish, when an enthusiastic Versluis took his first victory with his MAN; he did the Special in 1:52:55 hours and was 1:11 minute ahead of Karginov who was followed by MAN-pilot Marcel van Vliet who finished at 1:36 minute.

Best Iveco-pilot today was Hans Stacey; he finished 5th, 2:47 minutes behind Versluis. Hans was quite fast during the first part of the Special and even passed WP2 only 2 seconds behind the leader. Gerard had to be satisfied with a 7th place at 4:06 minutes behind the winner and just ahead of the fast service truck from Pep Vila who finished 42 seconds later.

The 2nd fast service truck has also finished; he took the 15th place at 12:18 minutes so the entire team Petronas – de Rooy – Iveco worked their way through the well-deserved rest day.

The general rankings have hardly changed compared to yesterday. The IVECO Powerstar from Gerard de Rooy is still on the lead. He did lose a few minutes; Karginov now takes the 2nd place at 29:05 minutes, followed by his KAMAZ-mate Nikolaev who’s 1:07:42 hour behind the leader. Hans moved up to the 4th place with his IVECO Trakker, 1:19:44 hour behind his team-mate. During the rest day the team captain Jan de Rooy will decide who will be tipped to win; most likely this will be Gerard de Rooy.

Tomorrow it’s time to turn the vehicles inside out and to prepare them for the 2nd part of the rally; according to the ASO it will be a tough one. We’re looking forward to it!

Tomorrow, from the bivouac, we’ll bring you the latest news and an update of the experiences of the team. We’ll also talk to the mechanics who can stay in Salta for 3 nights as the trucks will make a round on Sunday and will return to the same bivouac in the evening.

To be continued

