

## Nasser Al-Attiyah lays down marker during Dakar Rally prologue



### Three-time champion takes top spot on the podium in the car category.

Racing got underway at the 2021 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia as some of the biggest names in rally-raid took part in today's 11km prologue stage. Holding an early lead in the car race is Qatar's Nasser Al-Attiyah, while Ricky Brabec took first place in the bike category.

Here is all you need to know:

- In the car category it was three-time Dakar winner Al-Attiyah who gained the advantage in the prologue, claiming his 36th stage win. He will now open tomorrow's 277km timed special stage.
- The Qatari driver, who won the Dakar Rally in 2011, 2015 and 2019, said: "Things get serious tomorrow with a long opening stage."
- Al-Attiyah's fellow Toyota Hilux drivers Kuba Przygoński and Giniel De Villiers both posted fast times, while MINI JCW Buggies of Carlos Sainz and Stéphane Peterhansel were also able to stay close to the front on the prologue.
- "We feel so lucky to be starting the race, I want to say a big thank you to everybody who has made this possible," said Peterhansel.
- Frenchmen Sébastien Loeb and Cyril Despres can be happy with their first Dakar kilometres with their respective new projects. Nine-time WRC champion Loeb was only 17 seconds off Al-Attiyah's time and Despres just 30 seconds further

back.

- In the bike contest, defending champion Brabec won the prologue, but former winners Toby Price, Matthias Walkner and Sam Sunderland all finished within a minute of the leader.

- Dakar debutant Daniel Sanders enjoyed an impressive prologue with the day's third fastest time. He said: "The bike was flying and I really had a good day. It was good to get rid of some nerves ahead of our first big day tomorrow."

- Sanders was not the only Dakar rookie earning a place on the podium, as Seth Quintero scored second place in the Lightweight Vehicles category. The 18-year-old was denied the chance to race the Dakar last year on account of his age and is clearly in the mood to make up for lost time.

- Serial truck race winners Team Kamaz Master are well set up after the prologue with all four of their crews within a minute of race leader Siarhei Viazovich. The closest Kamaz trucker to the top of the leaderboard is Anton Shibalov who stands just seven seconds off the pace.

- In the quad category, it was a tight finish with Frenchman Alexandre Giroud taking top spot on the podium – finishing just one second ahead of Argentina's Manuel Andujar.

- There was also success for the duo of Austin Jones and Gustavo Gugelmin in the SSV category, with the pair finishing four seconds ahead of their nearest rivals.

Top three overall results in each category

#### Car

1. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)/Matthieu Baumel (FRA) Toyota Gazoo Racing 0h05m48s
2. Brian Baragwanath (ZAF)/Taye Perry (ZAF) Century Racing 0h05m48s
3. Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU)/Dirk von Zitzewitz (DEU) Overdrive Toyota +0h00m08s

#### Bike

1. Ricky Brabec (USA) Honda 00h06m01s
2. Joan Barreda Bort (ESP) Honda +00h00m06s
3. Daniel Sanders (AUS) KTM +00h00m13s

#### Truck

1. Siarhei Viazovich (BLR) Mazda 00h06m38s
2. Aliaksei Vishneuski (BLR) Mazda +00h00m01s
3. Martin Macik (CZE) Iveco 00h00m03s

#### SSV

1. Austin Jones (USA)/Gustavo Gugelmin (BRA) Can-Am 00h06m43s
2. Reinaldo Varela (BRA)/Maykel Justo (BRA) Can-Am +00h00m04s
3. Saleh Alsaif (SAU)/Oriol Vidal Montijano (ESP) Black Horse +00h00m05s

#### Quad

1. Alexandre Giroud (FRA) Yamaha 00h07m35s
2. Manuel Andujar (ARG) Yamaha +00h00m01s
3. Kamil Wisniewski (POL) Yamaha +00h00m04s

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