



Media Information

## **GINIEL DE VILLIERS AND DENNIS MURPHY LEAD THE TOYOTA GAZOO RACING 1000 DESERT AFTER MORE THAN 500 KILOMETRES WITH ONE DAY TO GO**

Saturday, 25 June – With almost 550 racing kilometres of the Toyota Gazoo Racing SA (TGRSA) 1000 Desert in Upington now done, the 19 times Dakar Rally finisher, Giniel de Villiers, together with his navigator, Dennis Murphy (TGRSA DKR Hilux T1+) have not put a wheel wrong and are leading this marathon event.

The TGRSA 1000 Desert is the second round of the SA Rally-Raid Championship and is taking place over three days Friday, Saturday and Sunday in a cold and wet Northern Cape. A damp route due to welcome rain has challenged teams in the Production and Special Vehicle Categories for two days with the final 350 kilometre racing section still to be completed on Sunday, 26 June.

In the Production Vehicle Category, De Villiers/Murphy posted the fastest time after the 43km Pirelli Qualifying Race and the 171km Loop One on Friday and were the first team on the route that was shorten by 10 kilometres as it was badly rutted after the previous day.

De Villiers/Murphy had quite an uneventful day and completed the two 161km loops without any incidents to lead their team-mates, Guy Botterill/Simon Vacy Lyle, who started in second place and had a clean run, by four minutes and 33 seconds. The defending desert race winners, Brian Baragwanath/Leonard Cremer (Century Racing CR6) started the day from third place and are leading the FIA T1.2 Class for 2x4 vehicles and managed to keep their podium position despite losing time when they hit a rock that bent the front suspension.

Behind them disaster struck when engine problems forced Lance Woolridge/Elvéne Vonk (NWM Ford Castrol Ranger T1+) to retire on the first of the two loops. The TGRSA DKR Hilux T1+ in the hands of Shameer Variawa/Danie Stassen went well with the team rounding off the FIA T1+ Class and are fourth overall.

Lance Trethewey/Rodney Burke (King Price Xtreme Century Racing CR6) had another steady day and kept their second place in FIA T1.2 and fifth place overall. Behind them, the French couple, Yannick and Valerie Panagiotis in another Century Racing CR6, are loving the South African desert race and have moved up to sixth after starting the day in 10<sup>th</sup> place.

The Horn brothers, Werner and Johan (#TeamHilux Rally-Raid T1+) are seventh overall and fourth in the FIA T1+ Class followed by Dewald van Breda/Johann du Toit and Malcolm Kock/Jaco van Aardt in two Century Racing CR6 2x4 vehicles in the FIA T1.2 Class. Kock/Van Aardt lost time struggling with a problematic hydraulic jack system after replacing a flat tyre. The German driver Daniel Schröder and Ryan Bland (Nissan Navara) round off the top 10 with the team taking the lead in the FIA T1 Class.

Also on the FIA T1 podium after two days, are the consistent Philip Botha/Roelof Janse

In Partnership with



van Vuuren (Red-Lined Motorsport VK56) who are now second in class and 11<sup>th</sup> overall after another eventful day that saw them having to change a punctured wheel before experiencing fuel pump problems and losing fifth gear. They also assisted Eben Basson/Leander Pienaar (#TeamHilux Rally-Raid T1) with a spare wheel and nursed their vehicle home.

Basson/Pienaar had no less than five punctures and also received a spare from Visser/Venter, but lost time having to drive with the flat tyre. They are fourth in the FIA T1 Class and 13<sup>th</sup> overall, just behind their team-mates, Fouche and Bertus Blignaut who moved up the scoreboard to third in class and 12<sup>th</sup> overall. Johan de Bruyn/Gerhard Schutte (Red-Lined Motorsport VK56) are fifth in the class and 14<sup>th</sup> overall. There are not much between these T1 teams and a shuffle in the final results after three days of racing is quite possible.

Teams who could not finish, can take a time penalty and continue the race the next day. That is what the current champions, Henk Lategan/Brett Cummings (TGRSA DKR Hilux T1+) as well as Gary Bertholdt/Juan Möhr (Toyota Hilux T1) did after not being able to finish the first day. Bertholdt/Möhr lost time when they beached their vehicle, but are 17<sup>th</sup> overall and sixth in the FIA T1 Class. Lategan/Cummings posted the fastest time of the day and had a clean run. They are sixth in the FIA T1+ Class and 20<sup>th</sup> overall.

Day Two also looked much better for Gareth Woolridge/Boyd Dreyer (NWM Ford Castrol Ranger T1+) who lost lots of time with a burst oil cooler during Day One. The team worked their way to 15<sup>th</sup> place overall while they are fifth in the FIA T1+ Class.

The 17-year old scholar, Jayden Els and navigator Armand du Toit (King Price Xtreme Renault Duster) have maintained a good pace and kept their lead in Class T. They are 16<sup>th</sup> overall and a desert race finish and class victory are on the cards for the team. And after finishing last on Day One, Christo Rose/Arno Olivier (Neil Woolridge Motorsport Ford Ranger) moved up to 19<sup>th</sup> place overall after losing time unwrapping wire from the propshaft of their vehicle on the second loop. They are second in Class T with their team-mates, the Johnstone couple, Bernard and Minette, who could not finish the previous day, now third in the class standings. Johan and his son, Sean van Staden (KEC Racing Renault Duster) are fourth in Class T after struggling with a faulty clutch.

Most of the teams in the Production Vehicle Category survived a gruelling Day Two, but the day saw the demise of the T1 Class leader on Day One, Chris Visser/Albertus Venter (Red-Lined Motorsport REVO) who suffered two successive punctures early in the day with another puncture and damaged suspension after hitting a rock forcing them to retire. Other casualties included Thomas Bell/Wade Harris (Red-Lined Motorsport REVO) who snapped the main drive belt eight kilometres before the finish; the French Galpin couple, Jerome and Anne (Century Racing CR6) and Schalk Burger/Henk Janse van Vuuren (King Price Xtreme Mercedes-Benz).

The third and final day of the 2022 TGRSA 1000 Desert will start at 08h00 on Sunday with a new 170km loop awaiting the teams. They will have to complete this loop twice and will start and finish at the Upington Show Grounds where the Designated Service Park and Race Headquarters are situated.

Images: Andre Schoeman – [click to download](#)

