

2006 UAE Desert Challenge

Leg 5 Moreeb - Dubai

Liaison: 119.35 km, Special 122.45 km, Liaison 103.85 km, Special 163.90 km, Liaison 44.85 km - Total 554.40 km

Friday, November 10th, 2006

QATAR'S NASSER AL-ATTIYAH FINISHES FIFTH OVERALL IN UAE DESERT CHALLENGE X-RAID CARS TAKE 5TH, 6TH AND 8TH POSITIONS

Germany's Kleinschmidt and Spain's Montere in 6th and 8th positions

MOREEB (UAE): Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah and French co-driver Alain Guehennec headed a successful UAE Desert Challenge campaign for the X-Raid Team by clinching fifth overall with the third fastest time on the final selective section from Moreeb to Dubai on Friday.

Team mates Jutta Kleinschmidt and Swedish co-driver Tina Thörner finished sixth overall on the final round of the FIA Cross-Country World Cup, while Spaniard José-Luis Montere and Belgian co-driver Jean-Marie Lurquin were eighth. Brazilian Paulo Nobre was forced to retire with engine problems earlier in the event.

Al-Attiyah headed into the final selective sections on Friday behind twice WRC champion Carlos Sainz in the starting order. But the Qatari lost over eight minutes in the opening high-speed selective, where Frenchman Jean-Louis Schlesser set his first fastest time.

Al-Attiyah suffered a failing clutch cylinder and this was replaced after the selective and he was able to continue into the final timed test to set the third fastest time.

"I have never driven in such high temperatures on a rally for such a sustained period of time," said Al-Attiyah. "It was very tough. Our car was fantastic. We have learned a lot and I am sure that we will be able to improve even more on the Dakar. The team solved any problems we had very well."

Kleinschmidt and Thörner started the final day in sixth position, albeit under pressure from Japan's Hiroshi Masuoka. They were separated by 2m 42s at the start of the day and the Japanese gained 1m 25s in SSS5. The German X3 CC driver headed into the closing kilometres with a slender 1m 17s advantage, but set the fourth fastest time in the last section to preserve her sixth place.

Montere and Lurquin began the day in eighth position and maintained their place over the final two specials, setting the eighth quickest time in the final section to confirm their place inside the top 10.

"This was a very constructive and useful rally for us," said X-Raid Team Director Sven Quandt. "We have been able to assess the life of individual components and will be able to benefit from this on the Dakar. Our drivers have performed well. Nasser took it easier on the final stage, but Jutta pushed this morning to make sure that she kept sixth position. I am very pleased with the result."

Major support for the X-Raid team comes from new Hessen-based sponsor TrekStor, Magna Steyr, BMW Motoren GmbH, Reiger, BF Goodrich, MAN, Sabelt and BBS. The next test for the Trebur-based team will be the punishing Dakar Rally, starting in Lisbon on January 6th, 2007.

Positions after leg 5 –

1. Luc Alphand (F)/Gilles Picard (F) Mitsubishi Pajero/Montero

Evolution	16h 51m 15s
2. Stéphane Peterhansel (F)/Jean-Paul Cottret (F) Mitsubishi Pajero/Montero Evolution	17h 07m 14s
3. Jean-Louis Schlesser (F)/Emmanuel Guigou (F) Schlessers DSC Buggy	17h 27m 42s
4. Carlos Sousa (P)/Andreas Schulz (D) Volkswagen Touareg	17h 32m 12s
5. Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah (QA)/Alain Guehenec (F) BMW X3 CC	18h 02m 09s
6. Jutta Kleinschmidt (D)/Tina Thörner (S) BMW X3 CC	18h 25m 34s
7. Hiroshi Masuoka (J)/Pascal Maimon (F) Mitsubishi Pajero/Montero Evolution	18h 28m 16s
8. José-Luis Monterde (E)/Jean-Marie Lurquin (B) BMW X5	19h 03m 50s
9. Yayha Al-Helai (UAE)/Khaled Al-Kendi (UAE) Liberty Chevrolet	20h 44m 43s
10. Carlos Sainz (E)/Michel Périn (F) Volkswagen Touareg	21h 12m 45s