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## **Two-areg: Volkswagen defends “Dakar” title with one-two-three**

Triumphant title defence in South America: Volkswagen has won the legendary Dakar Rally for the second time in succession and including 1980 for a third time. After a ‘showdown in blue’ the Volkswagen duos and their TDI powered Race Touareg prototypes celebrated a one-two-three podium lockout at the finish of the toughest challenge worldwide in motorsport. In the process, Carlos Sainz/Lucas Cruz (E/E) triumphed by only 2 minutes 12 seconds ahead of his team mates Nasser Al-Attiyah/Timo Gottschalk (Q/D) in a thrilling finale on the closing 202 kilometre sprint on the 14<sup>th</sup> and final rally day. Mark Miller/Ralph Pitchford (USA/ZA) claimed third position. Last year’s winners Giniel de Villiers/Dirk von Zitzewitz (ZA/D) finished seventh.

“I’m incredibly proud of our team. It’s stunning what the drivers, co-drivers and the entire team have achieved on every single day of the Dakar Rally. With this one-two-three triumph Volkswagen Motorsport even surpassed its own lofty goals,” says Dr. rer. pol. h. c. Francisco Javier Garcia Sanz, Member of the Board of Management at VOLKSWAGEN AG for procurement, at the finish of the final stage. Volkswagen Motorsport Director Kris Nissen explains: “Three weeks ago a highly motivated Volkswagen team came with the goal of successfully defending the ‘Dakar’ title won last year. Volkswagen has achieved something historical with this one-two-three. We are not only unbeaten in South America, we are also the only manufacturer to have won the world’s hardest rally up to now with diesel technology. The Volkswagen

drivers fought amongst themselves for victory all the way to the chequered flag – sometimes by hard but fair means. This is exactly how we imagine motorsport to be. My congratulations therefore go to every Volkswagen duo who would all have been worthy winners.”

The Wolfsburg based brand therefore remains the only manufacturer to have won the car category of the Dakar Rally with diesel power. TDI technology was already dominant in 2009 in Argentina and Chile. In addition to the efficiency of the Volkswagen Group’s diesel direct injection technology the Race Touareg’s reliability was the key to the 2010 “Dakar” victory: Despite the extreme demands the powerful 300 hp Race Touareg proved to be not only the most robust, but also the fastest vehicle: Seven of 14 possible stage victories and eleven days in the lead were credited to the four-wheel drive racers from Wolfsburg.

The result of the rally kept observers and fans alike on tenterhooks up to the finish line: Carlos Sainz/Lucas Cruz, Nasser Al-Attiyah/Timo Gottschalk and Mark Miller/Ralph Pitchford led in this order since the fifth Dakar Rally stage. However, at no point did any driver duo have an unassailable lead. In a strong final burst Al-Attiyah/Gottschalk edged ever closer, repeatedly taking seconds from their Volkswagen team mates Sainz/Cruz and, in doing so, staged an open and hard but fair duel for the leading position. The Qatari/German duo made up ground specifically in the dune sections – which once again formed one of the “Dakar’s” core elements – while the Spanish duo Sainz/Cruz controlled proceedings on the fast, twisty gravel sections.

As varied as the fight in the overall standings was – two stage wins went to Sainz/Cruz, four to Al-Attiyah/Gottschalk, one to Miller/Pitchford –, so challenging proved the 32<sup>nd</sup> running of the Dakar Rally: In addition to the varied stages across soft, in part powder-like sand and through towering and endless dune fields of the Atacama Desert in northern Chile there were also gravel sections and tracks through enormous boulder fields on the agenda. The multi-faceted acid test with its terrain changing several times a day, two Andes crossings, passages through the world’s driest desert, the Atacama, as

well as parts of the legendary Pampa was mastered brilliantly by the Volkswagen Race Touareg. One Race Touareg was always found in the top-three of each stage at the finish, 27 of a possible 42 top-three positions on the 14 stages went to Wolfsburg.

For the new "Dakar" champions Carlos Sainz and Lucas Cruz a winning streak continued in front of millions of fans lining the daily stages in Argentina and Chile. As newly formed duo in the Volkswagen Race Touareg the Spanish pair remained unbeaten in their third competition together and secured a new superlative in "Dakar" history: Never before have two Spaniards won the legendary desert rally's automobile category. Sainz/Cruz had previously won the Rallye dos Sertões in June and July 2009 as well as the Silk Way Rally in September 2009.

The Volkswagen statistics in cross country rallying make for equally impressive reading: The Wolfsburg based brand is unbeaten since January 2009 and with its second "Dakar" triumph since 2009 continues the Volkswagen Group's success story with TDI technology: After Audi's Le Mans victories between 2006 and 2008 and winning the World Touring Car Championship with SEAT in 2008 and 2009, Volkswagen has been successful at the "Dakar" in 2009 and 2010 thanks to TDI Power.

### **#300 – Giniel de Villiers (ZA), 7<sup>th</sup> position overall**

"The operation 'title defence' was already over on the third day of the rally for my co-driver Dirk von Zitzewitz and I when we lost several hours due to an electrical problem after an end-over-end. From then on we put ourselves at the service of the team, as others also did for us in 2009. This is natural. First, second and third – this is an exceptional result for Volkswagen. Everybody in the squad deserved victory. Without question it is the best team in the world."

### **#300 – Dirk von Zitzewitz (D), co-driver**

"The 2010 Dakar Rally was once again an exciting 'Dakar'. The enthusiasm shown by the spectators in Chile especially, however, in Argentina never ceases to amaze me. Incredible just how much you are spurred on. From the sporting point of view the 'Dakar' did not run particularly well for Giniel and I,

as we already had to bury our thoughts of victory early on, and worked for the team from then on. Even though it was technically very tough on the material, I didn't find this 'Dakar' as demanding from the sporting side as 2009."

**#303 – Carlos Sainz (E), 1<sup>st</sup> position overall**

"I have fulfilled a dream by winning the 'Dakar'. An enormous weight has fallen from my shoulders particularly as the fight for victory was extremely hard both physically and enormously exhausting mentally. I'm incredibly happy to have achieved this goal after having been so close to victory on several occasions. Everything ran perfectly for me: My co-driver Lucas Cruz did an excellent job, from the technical side the Race Touareg ran like clockwork and the entire Volkswagen squad worked tirelessly for the win. Thank you for this."

**#303 – Lucas Cruz (E), co-driver**

"After so much pressure over the last few days it goes without saying that I'm incredibly happy on the day of my first 'Dakar' victory. I think we have beaten tough competitors and also one of the hardest 'Dakar's' ever. The tracks were varied and a new and great challenge every day, even though every stage wasn't at the same level. Carlos approached his job throughout the entire event patiently, concentrated but also with great tenacity. He is a great champion, it's fantastic to win with him."

**#305 – Mark Miller (USA), 3<sup>rd</sup> position overall**

"A great rally for us and for the entire Volkswagen team, which did an excellent job. It deserved to celebrate on the podium with three cars. It was small things that made the difference between winning and third place. I salute Carlos Sainz who drove almost faultless and who made the least amount of mistakes. It's just these small things that make the difference. My goal is to be better with the details in the future."

**#305 – Ralph Pitchford (ZA), co-driver**

"This 'Dakar' was hard, harder than the last year's event. To have taken third place behind two team mates and against the strong competition posed by

X-raid BMW, Hummer and Mitsubishi is a genuine success, even though our great dream of winning the 'Dakar' was not fulfilled. However, this rally is relentless and immediately penalises the smallest error. There is, however, no reason to regret having not achieved a better result – since finishing in the top three with such a strong team is sufficient reward.”

**#306 – Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q), 2<sup>nd</sup> position overall**

“On the one hand it goes without saying that it's tough to have just missed winning the 'Dakar'. However, on the other hand, I got the chance with Volkswagen to live my 'Dakar' dream all the way to the finish line, for which I am thankful. I feel completely at home in this team and look forward to every day with the squad. Carlos Sainz is a worthy winner and a real champion. Second place behind him is a fantastic result. Now I'm looking forward to challenge him at the forthcoming 'Dakar'.”

**#306 – Timo Gottschalk (D), co-driver**

“Those were the two hardest weeks of my life, particularly mentally. With such a strong driver alongside, like Nasser Al-Attiyah is, I wanted to do my stuff as best as I possibly could. We went through many highs and lows together during this 'Dakar'. All in all I'm extremely happy with the result. We demonstrated what we can do and that we are ready to win the 'Dakar'. To lose to such an exceptional driver like Carlos Sainz in such a close battle is – I think – respectable.”

**#312 – Maurício Neves (BR), retired**

“Unfortunately the 'Dakar' dream for Clécio Maestrelli and I ended much too early. On the sixth stage we didn't see a pothole and rolled several times. I broke four ribs in the process. However, it sounds worse than it is, because in view of the severity of the accident I escaped with light injuries thanks to the robustness of the Race Touareg. Shame for the team for whose work arriving at the finish in Buenos Aires would have been a fantastic reward.”

**#312 – Clécio Maestrelli (BR), co-driver**

“It’s a shame that we retired so early. The Dakar Rally was a fantastic experience and we really enjoyed the days before our accident. My thanks go to the Volkswagen squad who gave us this chance.”

### Number of the day

The 14<sup>th</sup> and final stage of the Dakar Rally produced the fastest average speed on a stage during the 2010 event. The average speed of stage winner Al-Attiyah was **152.070 km/h**.

### Final standings after stage 14, Santa Rosa (RA)–Buenos Aires (RA); 202/707 km SS/total

Pos.	Team	Vehicle	Leg 14	Total time
1	Carlos Sainz/Lucas Cruz (E/E)	Volkswagen Race Touareg 2	1h 20m 18s (2)	47h 10m 00s
2	Nasser Al-Attiyah/Timo Gottschalk (Q/D)	Volkswagen Race Touareg 2	1h 19m 42s (1)	+ 2m 12s
3	Mark Miller/Ralph Pitchford (USA/ZA)	Volkswagen Race Touareg 2	1h 21m 21s (5)	+ 32m 51s
4	Stéphane Peterhansel/Jean-P. Cottret (F/F)	BMW X3 CC	1h 20m 50s (4)	+ 2h 17m 21s
5	Guerlain Chicherit/Tina Thörner (F/S)	BMW X3 CC	1h 20m 25s (3)	+ 4h 02m 49s
6	Carlos Sousa/Matthieu Baumel (P/F)	Mitsubishi Racing Lancer	1h 25m 31s (15)	+ 4h 31m 45s
7	Giniel de Villiers/Dirk von Zitzewitz (ZA/D)	Volkswagen Race Touareg 2	1h 21m 23s (6)	+ 5h 10m 19s
8	Robby Gordon/Andy Grider (USA/USA)	Hummer	1h 21m 40s (7)	+ 6h 02m 24s
9	Orlando Terranova/Pascal Maimon (RA/F)	Mitsubishi Racing Lancer	1h 22m 10s (8)	+ 6h 04m 47s
10	Guilherme Spinelli/Filipe Palmeiro (BR/P)	Mitsubishi Racing Lancer	1h 24m 50s (13)	+ 6h 13m 41s