



PRESS RELEASE

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DAKAR 2010: READY TO BOARD

For the second consecutive year, the Dakar is welcomed in South America for a challenge of 9000 kilometres leading the riders and crews on the roads, the tracks, the mountains and the deserts of Argentina and Chile. From the 1st to the 17th of January, the competitors will fight it out on 14 stages: the loop to cover, anti-clockwise, will include a thorough visit of the Atacama Desert and its gigantic dunes. The white sand close to Fiambala or the grey one in the area of Nihuil will complete the spread of colours and the variety of difficulties all along the event.

At the end of the registration period, just a few days before the vehicles are welcomed to start the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean on a boat leaving Le Havre, the list of competitors confirms the status of the Dakar: with 184 bikes and quads, 138 cars and 50 trucks, the race remains the most attractive in the world. The expected media coverage, with footage broadcasted in 189 countries provides an outstanding relay for the constructors, the partners and the countries involved. At the moment of launching the celebrations of the bicentenary of its two nations, Argentina and Chile will actually be represented three times more than last year with competitors able to create a surprise.

It's probably in the bike class, where the field has already been transformed by the new regulation adopted, that a "native" rider could triumph. The Aprilia factory believes just as much in the future of the 450cc bikes than in the chances of Chilean Francisco "Chaleco" Lopez. Concerning the French, David Frétigné, 3rd last year on a 450cc Yamaha, or David Casteu who will launch the Sherco brand in the 450cc adventure, intend on being rivals for the winners of the last four editions, Marc Coma and Cyril Despres who will be riding with a bridle limiting the performances of their big cylinder KTMs. The 450cc machines developed by Honda and BMW will also be candidates for a place in the Top 10.

In the car class, the new situation should provide an intense confrontation. With more and more performing vehicles and two top quality recruits, Stéphane Peterhansel and Nani Roma, the BMW X-Raid team will show up with fine arguments against the title holders. The Volkswagen armada including the likes of Giniel De Villiers, Carlos Sainz and Nasser Al Attiyah, are forced to excellence. In the truck race, the Kamaz of Kabirov and Chagin will also have to keep a close eye on ambitious Ales Loprais, in his Czech Tatra truck.

Find all the news, list of registered competitors and course map at www.dakar.com

Pictures, map of the course, press kit on the serveur ftp : ftp.aso.fr

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