

2011 Dakar - flashback

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Team BMW Motorrad by speedbrain have reached their first milestone in the young history of the squad.

Following ten months of preparation, two of the team riders arrived at the finish of the Dakar 2011 in Buenos Aires. The individual results may not be satisfying, but the overall performance throughout the rally has everyone looking forward to the races ahead.

The recent Dakar turned out to be an ill-fated affair for the young team. The first setback: rally ace David Fretigne crashed during a test race in October and couldn't fully recover until the start of the Dakar. The south-american adventure had to take place without the Frenchman. The next low point came when Paulo Goncalves, who had just steered his BMW to a much-noticed stage win, had to retire with an injury. The same happened to Brazilian rider Ze Helio. Finally Frans Verhoeven was unlucky hitting a stone and damaging his engine case. The very fast and highly experienced Dutchman lost five hours, having to repair his bike.

Given all the drama, an end result of 15th for Verhoeven and 30th for Portuguese rider Pedro Bianchi Prata is a creditable achievement. Everyone who takes a closer look at the race statistics will notice that both team and bikes were fully competitive. It's just that Lady Luck wasn't kind to the Bavarian newcomers.

Verhoeven and Goncalves still recored one stage win each, plus three additional podium finishes. A speedbrain rider headed the provisional standings during five race days. Altogether team riders recorded 17 finishes inside the top ten. "That's a solid foundation," commented team principal Wolfgang Fischer. "The 14-men crew, coming from seven different nations - riders, mechanics, helpers - worked very well together. Everyone was fully concentrated on his job, there was a positive never-give-up attitude and a strong team spirit. We're fully motivated and will keep working hard to achieve good results in this year's FIM Rally World Championship.

"I'd like to thank all our sponsors and partners, first of all BMW and Monster Energy, for their vote of confidence and support. Our injured riders Paulo Goncalves, Ze Helio and David Fretigne are recovering well and will soon be ready to get on the gas again."