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Dakar Rally: with Big Shock Racing at the world's toughest race

The Dakar Rally is considered the world's most important off-road race. 14 stages in 15 days, nearly 9,000 kilometres through desert, wasteland and rocky areas. To successfully master this strenuous challenge, you need a motivated team, a disciplined driver and a perfectly-primed vehicle. The Big Shock Racing Team from the Czech Republic have been among the most successful participants over the last few years. Since 2009, the speedy Czech team has relied on Spies Hecker for their vehicle coatings.

For team founder Martin Macík Sr, the journey to success started in 2002. He had previously raced at events throughout the Czech Republic, mainly as the driver of high-speed sports cars. And yet, he still had one dream to fulfil: racing at the toughest rally in the world – the Dakar Rally. In 2002, Macík travelled to Senegal with his son Martin Jr, who was 13 at the time, to experience the final stage of the legendary off-road race up close. Buzzing with excitement, father and son made their way to the finishing line and saw... nothing. It was too busy to be able to see past the crowd. Nevertheless, their passion was ignited. In the same year, Martin Macík Sr bought an old truck that he single-handedly repaired.

15 years of Dakar experience

Macík Sr first drove at the Dakar Rally in 2003. He founded his own team five years later – KM Racing. In addition to the truck, the team also competed with a motorbike and a quadbike at the Dakar, which now takes place in South America. Macík also developed an idea for another source of income: as part of the "Rent Me!" scheme, Macík rents out racing cars and support vehicles to private individuals, including a team manager and technical assistance. This gives even amateur petrol heads the chance to take part in the most challenging off-road race in the world – provided they have the nerve and some spare cash, of course. Macík renamed KM Racing as Big Shock Racing in 2017.



Two weeks of the heaviest wear and tear is also very demanding of the coating.



For four years, Martin Macík Jr has successfully driven the Big Shock Racing truck, coming fifth in 2018.

Racing through the desert in up to 60-degree heat

For the fourth year in a row, the team founder's son, Martin Macík Jr, is behind the wheel of the truck. "It sounds a bit clichéd, but Dakar really is the toughest race in the world." Macík Jr races an 8.5-tonne truck at speeds of up to 140 km/h over rough terrain for two weeks. During this time, he rarely drops below 100 km/h. He and his team (a navigator and mechanic) have to cope with very strong vibrations that push the body to the extreme. Furthermore, outside temperatures fluctuate between zero and 40 degrees and temperatures in the driver's cab can even rise to 60 degrees. "Dakar is torture on the body, making it even more important to be on top form physically and mentally. Winning is a matter of determination. There is a strict schedule every day. I control when I'm hungry, when I'm thirsty, when I need to go to the toilet. With only six hours of rest time per day, I even have to learn how to turn my tiredness on and off almost at the drop of a hat," explains Macík Jr. His success is proof of this: he came in fifth place in the truck group in 2018. He wants to give it his all again in 2019, when he intends to reach the podium. He has obviously inherited his absolute love of racing from his dad.

"Racing is torture on the body, making it even more important to be on top form physically and mentally."

14 days of the Dakar Rally – a real challenge, even for the coating

The Dakar Rally is the highlight of every racing season. Immediately afterwards, the teams have to tackle the vehicles' maintenance and repairs. They do not have a dedicated specialist for every area of maintenance: "We do not have a qualified painter in the team. But Spies Hecker have been our coatings partner for the past nine years, and we trust them completely," explains Macík Jr. The team are extremely happy with the products used – primer filler Hepox EP 4400 and topcoats Permasolid® HS Topcoat 670 Series and Permasolid® HS Topcoat 675. "These products from Spies Hecker are exceptionally durable. They have to be, because the Dakar Rally is extremely hard-going on the paint work," explains Macík Jr. "Because of the heavy wear and tear during races, we paint our vehicles three to four times a season. Spies Hecker products are easy to use and they dry quickly and evenly. Getting a good finish from the paint is really important to us – our vehicles are an advertisement for the team after all."



Whether by truck, motorbike or quadbike: the Czech Big Shock Racing team have relied on coatings from Spies Hecker for the past nine years.

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