



Presseinformation

BILSTEIN and Defender Rally make history with Stock class victory at the Dakar Rally

Defender Rally, supported by Official Partner BILSTEIN, win the stock class of the legendary Dakar Rally – the toughest off-road challenge in the world. At the season opener of the FIA World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) across the Great Arabian Desert, Rokas Baciūška and his co-driver Oriol Vidal take first place in the Defender Dakar D7X-R. Sara Price alongside co-drive Sean Berriman, and Stéphane Peterhansel alongside Mika Metge, complete the Defender success in second and fourth place. Crucial to the victory: high-performance off-road shock absorbers from BILSTEIN.

Essen / Ennepetal, 22 January 2026 - The Dakar Rally, which kicks off the World Raid Rally Championship (W2RC), is considered the toughest motorsport event in the world: in the merciless heat of the desert, both human and machine must perform at the absolute limit, where others are forced to retire. No other terrain allows fewer mistakes. That's precisely why Defender Rally uses off-road shock absorbers from its suspension partner BILSTEIN. They are based on proven BILSTEIN Black Hawk technology – one of the most technically advanced suspension solutions in the off-road sector.

With BILSTEIN technology: Defender Dakar D7X-R dominates the Dakar Rally

The performance of this system has now been confirmed in the tough competition of the Dakar Rally. Over 5,000 kilometres of special stages and around 50 hours of competition time, the BILSTEIN Black Hawk shock absorbers enabled consistent suspension performance throughout the entire rally, thus supporting the technical basis for the strong results of Defender Rally: in particular Rokas Baciūška and co-driver Oriol Vidal, impressed with their exceptional consistency throughout the rally. Their stage one victory was followed by six more. This ultimately secured them the Dakar victory in the Stock category.

Second and fourth place also went to the Defender Rally Team: Sara Price finished second with a consistently strong performance, while Stéphane Peterhansel narrowly missed out on the podium in fourth place after technical problems during stages eight and nine.

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Engineered to endure the Everest of motorsport: BILSTEIN Black Hawk high-performance shocks

As a decisive factor for success throughout the entire rally, BILSTEIN's Black Hawk system was used for 14 days. The suspension is one of the few components that may be modified within the strict FIA regulations in the stock category.

Developed for maximum damper forces, extreme continuous loads, and precise control on changing surfaces, the BILSTEIN Black Hawk system formed the technical basis for stability, control, and reliability over the entire distance.

The highlight of this system is the patented Zone Control CR system with triple-piston design. This construction allows for precisely graded damping characteristics over the entire spring travel. The suspension is also equipped with Jounce Cut-Off, which reduces severity and frequency, thus enabling extreme jumps, and Rebound Cut-Off, which controls the rebound movement in the extension stage and reliably prevents unwanted "top-out" – the abrupt rebound of the wheels.

The triumph in the ultimate endurance test in international motorsports thus proves the performance and durability of BILSTEIN suspension technology from the aftermarket portfolio.

Tested in competition – proven for the road

The insights gained in motorsports flow directly into the development of future series and aftermarket solutions, in line with the principle: Tested in competition, proven for the road – and thus available to everyone.

The 2026 Dakar Rally marked the **start of a total of five races in the W2RC season** and the **first joint race in the partnership** between Defender Rally and BILSTEIN. With their class victory at the 2026 Dakar, both impressively underline how closely series proximity, technical excellence, and motorsport expertise are linked.

About BILSTEIN

BILSTEIN is part of thyssenkrupp AG and has its headquarters in Ennepetal, Germany. The company develops and produces suspensions, shock absorbers and springs for cars and vans and is one of the world's largest suppliers with an annual production of around 13 million shock absorbers. BILSTEIN is a technology

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