



2003 World Solar Challenge

Darwin > Adelaide 19 - 28 October 2003

Report 8
Sunday 19 October 2003

RACE UPDATES

Katherine Media Stop

316 km beyond Darwin

At the starting line we had a flat tyre, and we had to pump it up because we wouldn't have had time to change it. We had a terrific clean exit from Darwin and we had built a good 5-10 min lead over the next car, but 100km from Katherine the same tyre had gone flat again. We lost 7-8 mins in changing it and whilst by the side of the road the MIT team and Nuna past us.

At the Katherine Media Stop, Nuna was 1st, arriving at 11:35am, MIT 2nd at 11:37am, Aurora 101 3rd, 8 mins behind Nuna at 11:43am, Principia 4th at 12:12pm, Queens 5th at 12:24pm, Formosun 6th at 12:43pm, Bockum (Germany) 7th at 12:45pm, and Kelly (from South Australia) 8th at 12:54pm. Nuna's average speed was 88.3km/h, but the record for this stage was held by Honda, who achieved an average speed of 93.3km/h in the 1996 WSC. Otherwise our car is going very well and producing more power than expected!

Katherine to Dunmurra

The second leg was from Katherine to Dunmurra, another distance of 316km. Nuna came in 1st at 14:58, MIT came in 2nd at 15:15, and Aurora 101 at 15:28. Nuna were the true Flying Dutchmen - they averaged 109.6km/h for the second leg, breaking the record they set in 2001, which was 96km/h! We continued on to the closing time of the day (around 5pm), and in the last hour we passed MIT (2 mins ahead of them), but we were still 25 mins behind Nuna. We are camped for the night at Elliott. Our car's been running extremely well; the plan was to hold 100km/h speeds all day, which we seemed to managed to do. All 3 drivers had a turn at driving. Earlier in the year (with less sunlight) we got 25km further than we did in 2001.

The race patterns are already shaping up, with the Dutch having a very fast car, Aurora in a battle with MIT, and another group forming around Queens and Principia. Leaving the Dunmurra checkpoint, we ran into clouds into the last hour, and have had no opportunity to recharge the batteries.