



The World's Toughest Bicycle Race

RAAM Daily Wrap-Up: Day 6

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It's the halfway point, as the leaders head through boiling, flat Kansas in the closest RAAM we have seen in years.

RAAM Solo Male

Six days in, this race is hurting everyone from race leader Jure Robic to last-placed Kevin Kaiser. Tired muscles are nagging racers; famed RAAM-related injury "Schermer's Neck" – a neck pain resulting from holding one's head up for 22 hours a day of cycling – is plaguing several. As if the tiredness in the legs and mind wasn't enough, the whole body is beginning to revolt. The race has seen three DNFs in the last day; you can bet there will be more to come.

Robic and Wyss still closely-matched

And still, four and a half days down the road from Oceanside, through the vast, empty spaces of Kansas, two riders are distinguishing themselves from the rest of the pack in their epic battle: Jure Robic and Dani Wyss. Leader Robic suffered over the Kansas flats, in 95 degrees temperatures and whipping winds. He has opened up a slightly larger gap over Wyss, who now trails by 2.40. As they spur one another on with every time station report, one wonders whether Pete Penseyres's twenty-five-year old speed record of 15.4mph could fall.

They are both several hours ahead of Marko Baloh, who continues to ride with great consistency in third position. Resurgent after his early stomach problems, Gerhard Gulewicz is slowly hunting down the Slovenian, just three hours, thirty minutes behind.

European ultra-cycling star Christoph Strasser has slowed in the last few days, but he is still holding fifth. As the race takes its toll on his body, it may turn into a battle of survival rather than for a good placing. However, his last time station was logged as #24, yesterday evening. It may well be that the Austrian has abandoned the race.

Two Canadians gunning for sixth

Peter Oyler has been sat in sixth for the best part of two days, after a strong start. Compatriot Tony O'Keeffe preferred a slower opening few days, and has been building things up gradually, saving energy for the race's second half. Now, the two Canadians are just three hours apart. As Oyler suffers from "Schermer's Neck", he could soon be passed by 48 year-old O'Keeffe. The lieutenant colonel in the Canadian Forces could better his ninth place from the 2006 RAAM this time round.

Rudge moving on up

Also, keep an eye out for Daniel Rudge. An unfortunate DNF last year after suffering from

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the common neck injuries that befall RAAM competitors, he had a very steady first few days, near the bottom of the pack. He seems to have been saving himself for the last six days of the race, and is now sitting just outside the top ten. He leads a very tight group of four between eleventh and fourteenth, separated by just 45 minutes!

Indeed, everything is still very tight, with sixth place to fourteenth separated by just 1 mile per hour average. With all these positions about to reach halfway, everything can still change, especially as the days of cycling and physical and mental wear rack up.

Sanz Garcia, Preihs and Bradley DNF

There was no late update on Julian Sanz Garcia yesterday; as I suspected, this was no leaderboard glitch but just his DNF being considered. Comiserations to the Basque, who rode well in the top ten for the first day. Digestion problems and dehydration put paid to his challenge: if you can't eat or drink on this extreme race to replace energy, there's nothing you can do. The problems were so severe that Sanz Garcia had to check into the nearest hospital. Eighth-placed finisher last year, the friendly Spaniard – also a 24 hour track world record holder – will hopefully be back in the near future.

Franz Preihs also called it quits. The Austrian was the story of last year, breaking his collarbone at the 1,300-mile but soldiering on to finish a remarkable fourth. At 31, he has plenty of years to return to this race. However, he could not go on after sustaining a bad knee injury while climbing Manga Pass.

Finally, last-placed man Bill Bradley had to give in to the time cut, after falling below 10mph. His ride epitomises the RAAM spirit – every rider is a champion for training so hard, sacrificing so much and giving their all.

With six solo male riders out, only fifteen remain. With 1,500 miles left to ride, more will fall by the wayside in this cruel and unforgiving ultimate test of cycling endurance.

Tomorrow...

As they race through flattish Illinois and Montana, over the Mississippi, Robic and Wyss will be closing on the final 1,000 miles. Let's not forget that only the top four are currently over the halfway mark – the rest of the field are 400 miles back, and will be tackling the heat and flats of Kansas.

Solo Male RAAM Standings

1. Jure Robic (Slo) 1804.30 miles – **TS #30** – 4d 15h 32m (16.18mph average)
2. Dani Wyss (Swi) 1738.00 miles – **TS #29** – 4d 13h 57m (15.81mph)
3. Marko Baloh (Slo) 1614.50 miles – **TS #27** – 4d 10h 23m (15.18mph)
4. Gerhard Gulewicz (Aut) 1614.50 miles – 4d 13h 58m (14.68mph)
5. Christoph Strasser (Aut) 1471.50 miles – **TS #24** – 4d 06h 43m (14.33mph)
6. Peter Oyler (Can) 1471.50 miles – 4d 14h 59m (13.26mph)
7. Tony O'Keefe (Can) 1393.80 miles – **TS #23** – 4d 11h 09m (13.01mph)
8. Claudio Clarindo (Bra) 1393.80 miles – 4d 13h 24m (12.74mph)
9. Ben Popp (Usa) 1393.80 miles – 4d 14h 12m (12.65mph)
10. Jim Rees/Team Inspiration (Gbr) 1393.80 miles – 4d 16h 40m (12.37mph)
11. Daniel Rudge (Gbr) 1311.50 miles – **TS #22** – 4d 10h 17m (12.34mph)
12. Christopher Gottwald/Miles for Mentoring (Usa) 1311.50 miles – 4d 10h 54m



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(12.27mph)

13. Richard Newey (Gbr) 1311.50 miles – 4d 11h 05m (12.25mph)

14. Michael Cook (Usa) 1311.50 miles – 4d 11h 03m (12.25mph)

15. Kevin Kaiser (Usa) 1311.50 miles – 4d 15h 29m (11.76mph)

DNF Franz Preihs (Aut) 1044.10 miles – TS #18 – 3d 11h 08m (12.56mph)

DNF Julian Sanz Garcia (Spa) 934.20 miles – TS #16 – 3d 01h 02m (12.79mph)

DNF Jean Marc Velez (Fra) 934.20 miles - TS #16 - 3d 5h 42m (12.02mph)

DNF Bill Bradley (Usa) 884.10 miles – TS #15 – 3d 22h 42m (9.34mph)

DNF Patrick Autissier (Fra) 563.00 miles - TS #9 - 2d 01h 59m (11.26mph)

DNF Scott Luikart (Usa) 396.70 miles – TS #6 – 1d 04h 39m (13.85mph)

RAAM Solo Female

Five days in, the three hardy women competitors are passing the halfway point at Pratt, Kansas. Janet Christiansen still boasts a healthy six-hour lead over Daniela Genovesi, who is herself several hours in front of sole 50-59 entrant Ann Wooldridge.

Now, the ladies will have to deal with the dry heat and open spaces of the Kansas flats. In the coming day, they will also be passed by the main pack of the RAAM men's solo race too. Wooldridge could also soon fall foul of the dreaded time limit.

1. Janet Christiansen (Usa) 1503.40 miles – **TS #25** – 5d 9h 31m (11.61mph)

2. Daniela Genovesi (Bra) 1471.50 miles – **TS #25** – 5d 15h 37m (11.09mph)

DNF Michele Santilhano (Rsa) 884.10 miles – TS #15 – 3d 14h 01m (10.28mph)

RAAM Solo Female 50-59

1. Ann Wooldridge (Gbr) 1393.80 miles – **TS #23** – 5d 6h 18m (11.04mph)

RAAM Solo Male 50-59

Things are getting tough for Hermann Bachmann. While he is now over ten hours behind Dominique Briand, the trained sports therapist's average has dropped to 10.05mph over the long ascents of Colorado and New Mexico. Finishing is now of greater concern to the 53 year-old, as he must battle to keep his average up. However, with sleep necessary, it could well be a losing battle.

Meanwhile, Briand continues to ride well, averaging 11.98mph halfway through his fourth day on the 2009 RAAM.

1. Dominique Briand (Fra) 1311.50 miles – **TS #22** – 4d 13h 29m (11.98mph)

2. Hermann Bachmann (Swi) 1097.20 miles – **TS #19** – 4d 13h 10m (10.05mph)

RAAM Solo Male 60-69

Solid-as-a-rock Paul Danhaus continues his excellent race. Five days in, he is still averaging almost 12mph. If he keeps up this consistency, he will make the finish in Annapolis within the time limit, which would be an awesome ride.

1. Paul Danhaus (Usa) 1576.30 miles – **TS #26** – 5d 13h 13m (11.83mph)



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RAAM Teams

RAAM 8-Person Open

A day and a half in and no other octet can live with the pace Team Type 1 are setting at the head of the race. Despite some crew vehicle breakdown problems, the cyclists themselves are still going strong. As they hit the race's toughest part, they have knocked off 884.10 miles at an incredible 24.37mph.

Second-placed Team ViaSat are doing their best to keep the diabetes-sufferers in touch, ninety minutes in arrears, knowing that they could turn the screw in the last third of the race. Team Donate Life – Give Hope sit third, several hours behind.

1. Team Type 1 (Usa) 884.10 miles – **TS #15** - 1d 12h 17m (24.27mph)
2. Team ViaSat (Usa) 814.00 miles – **TS #14** - 1d 10h 26m (23.64mph)
3. Team Donate Life – Give Hope (Usa) – 769.20 miles - **TS #13** – 1d 11h 17m (21.80mph)
4. Team Donate Life – Liverators (Usa) – 719.10 miles – **TS #12** – 1d 11h 14m (20.41mph)
5. Bike M.A.D. (Gbr) 719.10 miles – 1d 12h 51m (19.51mph)
6. Team Vera Bradley (Usa) 679.50 miles – **TS #11** – 1d 12h 02m (18.86mph)
7. The Caledonian Chain Gang (Gbr) 634.80 miles – **TS #10** – 1d 12h 10m (17.55mph)
8. Team Type 2 (Usa) 634.80 miles – 1d 12h 40m (17.31mph)

RAAM Open Open

1. Team JDRF (Usa) 769.20 miles – **TS #13** – 1d 13h 11m (20.69mph)

RAAM 4-Person Male

Team RANS and Team Surfing USA are sharing a good ol' dogfight at the top of the leaderboard. The two quartets are separated by just 17 minutes after 769 miles, which is absolutely nothing over such a long race. Team Strong Heart are also going well, just eighty minutes behind the leader.

With OC Quattro and the Austria Triathlon Team also riding fast, we have five strong teams battling for victory. This could be one of the closest runs competitions in the whole of the RAAM this year. Let's see if the Rockies and the New Mexico hills do anything to split things up.

1. Team RANS (Usa) 769.20 miles – **TS #13** – 1d 11h 19m (21.78mph)
2. Team Surfing Usa (Usa) 769.20 miles – 1d 11h 36m (21.61mph)
3. Team Strong Heart (Usa) 769.20 miles – 1d 12h 39m (20.99mph)
4. OC Quattro (Usa) 719.10 miles – **TS #12** – 1d 11h 12m (20.43mph)
5. Austria Triathlon Team (Aut) 719.10 miles – 1d 11h 26m (20.29mph)
6. Vencendo Desafios Team Brazil (Bra) 679.50 miles – **TS #11** - 1d 12h 48m (18.46mph)
7. Berliner (Ger) 679.50 miles – 1d 13h 08m (18.30mph)
8. Team SaveBuzzardsBay.org (Usa) 634.80 miles – **TS #10** - 1d 11h 35m (17.84mph)
9. Ari's Angels (Usa) 634.80 miles – 1d 12h 36m (17.34mph)
10. Drew's Crew (Usa) 634.80 miles – 1d 13h 16m (17.03mph)
11. Equipe Schwarz (Ger) 563.00 miles – **TS #9** – 1d 09h 15m (16.93mph)



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12. Team Can Be Venture (Usa) 491.10 miles – **TS #8** – 1d 11h 38m (13.78mph)

RAAM 4-Person 50-59

The Georgia Chain Gang continue to make good progress across the West, with a healthy average speed of 18.61mph as they head towards Colorado.

1. Georgia Chain Gang (Usa) 679.50 miles – **TS #11** – 1d 12h 31m (18.61mph)

RAAM 4-Person 75+

Into the final half of the race, the outstanding septuagenarians of Great Grand PAC Masters are, if anything, getting faster. Their average speed has been higher over the last day, as they ride strongly through Kansas.

1. Great Grand PAC Masters 1679.00 miles – **TS #28** – 4d 16h 13m (14.96mph)

RAAM 4-Person Mixed 50-59

German four-up Buchholz goes America are riding well. Now out of Arizona, it may be early days but they will be hoping to keep up their average speed all the way to the finish.

1. Buchholz Goes America (Ger) 719.10 miles – **TS #12** – 1d 13h 44m (19.06mph)

RAAM 4-Person Mixed Under 50

All Wheels 4 Fibromyalgia have taken the race by the scruff of the neck, opting for the quicker early pace. However, with British rivals Team Human Science just under an hour behind, this fight is still in its infancy.

Sami's Team are coping well in third, with an average of 17.84mph.

1. All Wheels 4 Fibromyalgia (Usa) 769.20 miles – **TS #13** – 1d 14h 03m (20.22mph)

2. Team Human Science (Gbr) 719.10 miles – **TS #12** – 1d 12h 39m (19.62mph)

3. Sami's Team (Usa) 679.50 miles – **TS #11** – 1d 14h 05m (17.84mph)

RAAM 2-Person Male

Patrick Blair and Adam Driscoll, who make up Adventures for the Cure, have largely maintained their early pace and are putting time into the E-HUB TEAM. The Baltimore natives are planning on raising \$50,000 for diabetes research.

However, pacing is crucial, and it is likely that Percic and Rosenstein will try to keep within range and muster a comeback in the last half of the race.

SpinVox Adventurers, the only mixed team, are making steady progress on their journey, while sole 50-59 male duo Team Reaching Heights are also riding well.

1. Adventures for the Cure (Usa) 769.20 miles – **TS #13** – 1d 13h 19m (20.61mph)

2. E-HUB TEAM (Slo) 719.10 miles – **TS #12** – 1d 14h 01m (18.92mph)

RAAM 2-Person Male 50-59

1. Team Reaching Heights (Usa) 679.50 miles – **TS #11** – 1d 13h 10m (18.28mph)



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RAAM 2-Person Mixed

1. SpinVox Adventurers (Gbr) 563.00 miles – **TS #9** – 1d 13h 17m (15.10mph)

Race Across the West – Solo Female

As of yesterday, two competitors were yet to cross the finish line in Taos: Leslie Holton and Jennifer Swaney. Sadly, both fell foul of the time cut. Swaney's race ended at TS #13 in Cortez, CO, while race leader Holton battled on to Pagosa Springs before calling it quits, averaging 9.7mph. 930 miles in, both the distance, fatigue and Colorado mountains put paid to their respective challenges. Both can be immensely proud of their efforts.

DNF Leslie Holton (Usa) 934.20 miles – TS#16 – 4d 0h 21m (9.70mph)

DNF Jennifer Swaney (Usa) 769.20 miles – TS #13 – 3d 13h 14m (9.02mph)