

## Sudan

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Date: 25-jan-2006

Stage: Wadi Haifa to Semna

Distance: 52km (53km)

Time: 5h 31m

GPS at destination: E 31°07'49" N21°27'13"

Country: Sudan

We got up early and had our 3rd, 4th or maybe 5th experience of Africa-wait. The trucks needed to get gasoline and water, the electricity in town (that you need for the pumps) only started at 10:00, so by the time we had taken our group photo and got everything setup it was quite late and we still were supposed to do 60km on the rough roads!

We killed the time by doing some more maintenance on the bikes, Kees' handle bar bag decided to give up, so all the things like camera's etc. needed to be put in his camel bag, not pleased at all with a new piece of high class material that has cost a fortune!



We also got visitors, children came out of school and we took some photo's from them. The really had a laugh when we showed the pictures to them on the back of the electronic camera's.

The first say 3 kms were not so bad, but then the rough roads started, plenty of patches of sand as well, so by the time we got to the "lunchstop" we were late and feared that we would not be able to finish before the sun disappeared, well we just made it! We were encountered by cheering and handclapping of those that went a lot faster than we. A scene we will experience a couple of times during this Tour we believe!



This was our first desert camp, unfortunately the lunchtruck had our red boxes and that truck was still picking up those that could not finish the day, so we had to wait and were eating late.

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Date: 26-jan-2006

Stage: Semna to Farka

Distance: 86 km (89km)

Time: 8h 49m

GPS: E30°38'15"N20°56'10"

country: Sudan

We got on the road before the official start time, the first part was OK compared to yesterdays conditions, but the last hour before the lunchtruck was terrible, so we were glad we were there. The colors of the sand are beautiful.

We got a tailwind and lot of washboard roads, sometimes we could find ways around it and every so often we took a short brake to replenish our energy.



Our fellow countryman Geert-Jan on his recumbent had difficult times and could unfortunately not make the whole day. Julie who got a sunstroke yesterday had to give up as well. This is a difficult tour indeed.

Kees had problems with his bottom and needed to be plastered with duck tape. Not the preferred way of driving on a bike!

The daily last 30 to 60 minutes started, when do we find the white flag? After almost 9 hours we saw it and were happy to have made it again.

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Date: 27-jan-2006  
Stage: Farka to Kaimato  
Distance: 98km  
Time: 6h 48m  
GPS at destination: E 30°24'34" N20°20'50"  
Country: Sudan

It was rather cold when we left camp. The road became more interesting, with little villages, where we took photos and were surprised by the friendliness and beauty of the people here.

It was difficult to find out how far we still needed to go, we could not understand the name of the towns as they were only written in Arabic.

When we finally arrived, Rita had started a yell with the children there, Hup Holland! Nice to be welcomed like that. We took two boys on the bike and toured around with them. The camping was right on the Nile and we took a bath in it.



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Date: 28-jan-2006

Stage: Kaimato to Kudayn

Distance: 81 km

Time: 7h 41m

GPS at destination: E 30°29'01" N29°54'121

Country: Sudan

Again a cold start in the Nibian desert. What a good decision it was to equip our bikes with a suspension fork, although we had doubts and were advised to the contrary (they fail often in these conditions) we are happy with it. We would not have managed to get over these washboards without it.

After on hour or so first the truck passed us and then the racers, right after we had beautiful view over the

## Travel journal

Published: Friday, 10 May 2019 10:00  
Written by Kees Vонк

river Nile.

In one town we bought a coke and found out that the shop owner had a degree in computer science, for the moment not a very good investment indeed!

After taking more pictures of the beautiful people here and taking a wrong turn despite the clear map...



...we ended up in camp, a very windy place this time, so we put our tent right next to the truck to get some shade from the wind.

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Date: 29-jan-2006

Stage: Kudayn to Dongola

Distance: 91km

Time: 8+1h 41+53m

GPS at destination: not registered

Country: Sudan

Today was special, we needed to cross the river, but first go to the last part of the Nubian desert in convoy.

We stopped frequently to not loose contact with the others, in 2004 this stretch was taken at the end of the day and at sunset 9 people were not accounted for, so the organisation does not want to have that experience again!

We crossed some sort of a dike where we had a talk with a nice man on his donkey.

In Kerma we needed to wait for one of the trucks and again had plenty of time to talk with the local people, who are very friendly and explained that there town was a major capital of the kingdom that existed here almost 5000 years ago.

The trip trough town took longer than expected and also we needed to wait a hour or more for the ferryboat. So by the time we reached the other side of the Nile, it was 16:45 and we were told that we needed to do 60km still! We were afraid (again) of not being able to make it before sunset, but fortunately the calculation was wrong, it was only 40km



and as we had a tailwind, we just made it!

What did not make it were our red boxes, so we had to wait 2 hours before we got those and went to the hotel that we had booked to recharge our batteries, not only those of the electronic equipment, but also our own.

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[Date: 30-jan-2006 Stage: Dongola \(restday\)](#)

[Country: Sudan](#)

Is this called a restday, forget it. Cleaning the tent, the clothes, the bikes, ourselves, by 15:00 we were flat out and decided to just sit in front of our hotelroom and relax, so consequently we did not see too much of Dongola, other than the road we took.

For Internet we had no time, but that was not a big issue, the crooks here wanted \$15/hour! No way! Paying in the hotel after the evening meal was an adventure, it took 45 mins to get the bill right and converse it to dollars!

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[Date: 31-jan-2006](#)

[Stage: Dongola to Rosy Al Bahri](#)

[Distance: 111 km](#)

Time: 7h 56m

GPS at destination: E 30°40'11" N18°18'49"

Country: Sudan

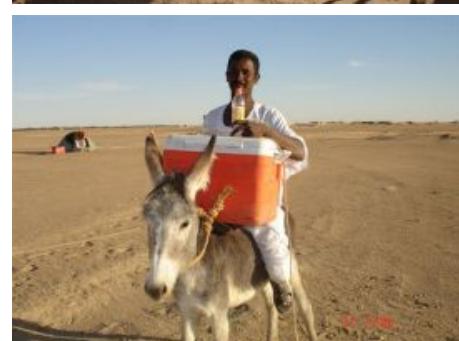
With our red boxes on taxi we went back to camp, as to return on the same road per bike in convoy to get to the road to Khartoum. The first 45km were great, we had black-top (asphalt) and could make a very good speed indeed.

After that gravel and camels and the road became really bad, the tapes on Kees' bottom did not hold and he needed to be retaped during lunch. We were told that at a certain moment we had a choice between 3 roads, the fast one, the one through towns and the one through the sand.

We thought that we made a mistake, but thanks to Jenny, who saw a greenish piece of land that was the right road, we got back on track. Later that day we had a couple of us missing, Catherine came very late and had walked 3 hours through the sand, and Rash needed to be picked up as she was still not in camp at sunset.

Our local guide Midhad arranged for a shop nearby to get a very special delivery of soft drinks, on the back on a donkey.

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Date: 1-feb-2006

Stage: Rosy Al Bahri to desert camp

Distance: 111km

Time: 9h 57m

GPS at destination: E 31°20'57" N17°44'19"

Country: Sudan

We left right after a beautiful sunrise

and first got 20km of asphalt, followed by a terrible 40km till lunch. It took us 5 hours and we still had to do another 50km or so. Our temper did go down a bit, when kids started to throw stones at us as well. Midhad our local guide on his bicycle, went after some of them. We hope it will help for the 2007 Tour!

The very good moments were when we encountered a nomad family with goats and camels. Finally, we got the asphalt back, but also a strong headwind, so this day was not an easy one.

When we still needed to do 30km, a truck stop was invaded by the Tour d'Afrique-ers to get soft drinks.

in the Sahara the roads are long and endless with no mountains, so that is bad for the moral, especially if you have a headwind as well.

Coming to camp, Kees' bike needed some repair, the dust and sand that slowed it down a bit. To get the moral back, we were told that tomorrow the road would be blacktop all the way, for 130km.

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Date: 2-feb-2006

Stage: Desert camp to desert camp

Distance: 128km

Time: 9h 53m

GPS at destination: E 31°47'47" N 16°45'44"

Country: Sudan

Plenty of wind in the morning, so we wanted to get on the road as soon as possible. The roads were as yesterday

afternoon, so it came to the moral again. The Lunchstop was hot. Big Mike had to stop as he got an infection on his foot, he was urgently brought to Khartoum that evening.

We stopped twice to get some cold drinks, the second time to find someone having his water pipe and allowing us to take a picture.

There were more and more cars, or actually trucks on the road, well, not on, but on the side of the road. Don't know how long this truck was already there, but if the direction of the wind changed, it might have tipped over!

The heat started to get unbearable, for some of us too much, 53 degrees in the sun. So fortunately that our buggy with Theresa came by and provided Kees with an off the road shower!

Plenty of us had problems with the heat and we were told that after Khartoum it will really become hot, thank you very much!

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Date: 3-feb-2006

Stage: Desert camp to desert camp

Distance: 133km (5 km detour)

Time: 7h 23m

GPS at destination: E 32°18'11" N 15°50'16"

Country: Sudan

The 120km announced yesterday for today was changed as a real storm was developing in the right directions of us. Unfortunately Jenny's expensive saddle decided to give up and even with the help of our mechanic we could not get it.

quickly back. Fortunately, Judy had a spare, so we swapped it and got on the road. Kees was not happy being the last one on the road, but this is the Tour as well.

The wind increased almost by the hour and the lunchstop in the sandstorm was quite mysterious; a fine yellow mist is the best way to describe it. We almost did not see the sun at all.

Kees' lenses gave him problems, hard lenses and sand are not good friends really! We had to make detour, but due to the sandstorm were in doubts about our road. We asked twice if we were still going in the right direction, at a certain moment a Sheppard with an axe in his hand started a conversation with us, but honestly we had no clue what he wanted, perhaps he was telling us that we were crazy to be out on the road?

Finally, finally we got the asphalt back and raced to the camp, were came as the very last couple. Many decided at the lunch stop to get in the truck, not these stupid Dutchies!

A nice "shower" with two bottles of water and we were "clean" enough to have food and get into the tent.

Tomorrow will be an easy day, only a short distance as a time trial and then an escort into the town of Khartoum.

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Date: 4-feb-2006

Stage: Desert camp to Khartoum

Distance: 18km (TT) (27km convoy)

Time: 38mins on the TT

GPS at destination: not registered

Country: Sudan

The time trial was fun. We decided just to take it easy and saw a lot of the

participants flying by (tailwind again). There was a real Tour d' Afrique atmosphere; it's a nice group of people we do this trip with!

After the finish of the TT we went in convoy and the last 20km with police escort. You feel really like an important person if the whole road is blocked for you and all cars need to stop. Behind us plenty of cars and trucks were tailed back, but when there where some sandy roads next to the main roads, they started to overtake the convoy, creating a lot of dust in the air.



Before noon we entered the camp, the Blue Nile River camp, were we could wash our clothes and ourselves and finish this report to send to you all.

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**Date: 05-feb-2006**  
**Stage: Rest day Khartoum**  
**Country: Sudan**

This day has been a real rest day for a change, as we arrived early the day before, the usual washing/cleaning ceremony already took place and we had all the time of the world to look around, shop and send our Internet report. The evening before our group was invited by the Sudanese cycling club for dinner. As Sudan is a alcohol free country, no wine or beer with the meal but only soft drinks!

In the afternoon we did some shopping in

an incredible western shopping mall outside of the centre. We found some new plates and cups, as the plates we took from home were far to small for our big appetite each day. In the afternoon we went to the local Internet café, thinking that we would be ready in 15 minutes or so as we had prepared the file and photos on one of our friends pc the day before. No way! First we got a power cut when trying to send the file and next the system became so slow that we had to send the photos one by one. Yes, this is Africa, they have the time here and very slow Internet connections. So at the end we sat there for 2 hours, Jenny was sleeping beside the pc sometimes.

It is always nice to meet people from your own country, especially if they are as helpful as Wilhelmina, she came on our rest day and introduced herself, immediately asking if there was anything we needed. Jenny would like to get long cotton pants that she could use during cycling, as even with the use of sun crème, she got a sun irritation under her clothes. Well, in Khartoum you cannot find anything in cotton to start with, but Wilhelmina had an idea. She had a lot of cotton t-shirts left from a commercial event and proposed to cut those up and ask her local tailor to make two pair of pants for Jenny. A big thanks to her as this has been very useful for Jenny, who btw got a new nickname due to her outfit, Pippi Langkous (Pippi Longstocking).

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[Date: 06-feb-2006](#)

[Stage: Khartoem to Nile River camp near El Hassaheisa](#)

Distance: 144 km

Time: 7 h 36 m

GPS at destination: E 33°18'20" N 14 ° 44 ' 41 "

Country: Sudan

We had a very good sleep after our rest day and were all in for a nice day out of Kartoum. Unfortunately some discussion took place as the announced distance from camp to the next camp was 165km, and no possibility for the leisure riders to start early as we had to go in convoy out of the city of Khartoum. Given the fact that the temperature during the afternoon can reach close to 50 degrees Celsius, not something that these riders were looking forward to. By 10 o'clock we were out of town and could start the 145km left. We pushed the pedals, had a side wind and a lot of traffic. This is the main road through Sudan from the capital to Gedaref and Port Sudan. We needed to get used to that, as the next 3 days we were passed by numerous trucks and busses.

We were joint by a group of local riders from the Sudanese cycling club, who tried to join the racers during this first stage out of Khartoum.

We also got company of a new Dutch rider Arnold, who we already knew from our get together in Holland in December. Arnold did the 2005 tour, but had to get back to Holland, as he broke his hip 2 days out of Khartoum. He joined the 2005 tour later on when he still was not able to walk without crunches, but cycled from Linglongwe to Cape town. He is now there to do the missing part and likes to win some of the stages on his cross bike. Good luck Arnold!

After the lunch stop it started to get



really warm, and for the first time we asked the lunch truck to stop when it passed us as we were running out of water. The water in our bottles btw is getting so hot, that you could take a warm shower with it!

We stopped a little later to join some others to drink a coke, thinking that we still needed to do 25 km's, but were pleasantly surprised to find the white Finish flag after only 3 km's! We made it again!

The local officials surprised our group, they came with a bag full of soft drinks and fruit for all the riders. We will miss the hospitality of the Sudanese people, that's for sure!

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**Date: 07-feb-2006**

**Stage: Nile River camp to desert camp**

**Distance: 155 km**

**Time: 9 h 05 m**

**GPS at destination: E34 ° 15 ' 14 " N 14 ° 08 ' 32 "**

**Country: Sudan**

Another long and hot day, and this time with about 110km's headwind! These two elements are already a challenge, but add to that the passing busses, for which we think that the drivers have license to kill. The smaller busses, who drive not that fast but have on their wheels those Ben Hur (movie) pins, and finally the long trucks, double trailers actually with a length of over 20m long.

The roads are long winding, so pedalling comes down to the 20 cm's between your ears to keep up the morale. One of the riders was so taken by all this traffic, temperature, etc. that she burst in tears at lunch. You ask yourself is this is really fun!

We took the bridge of the Blue Nile and immediately saw a change in landscape and structure of the towns. Not the cubical houses with a flat roof any more, but round structures and made of clay and straw. The real Africa is starting.

The campsite was wonderful, a bit from the road and against some mountains that occasionally rise out of the desert. Our riders meeting that is held every day before we take our dinner became an impressive memorial service, last year one of the riders got a heart attack when driving in the truck (as he was not feeling to well) and passed away. Randy did a heart-warming speech and we all felt very close to this unfortunately rider and those that he left behind.

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Date: 08-feb-2006

Stage: Desert camp to Gedaref

Distance: 130 km

Time: 10 h 27 m

GPS at destination: not registered

Country: Sudan

This was going to be one of the difficult days. Although the distance did not seem to be a major problem, the headwind in

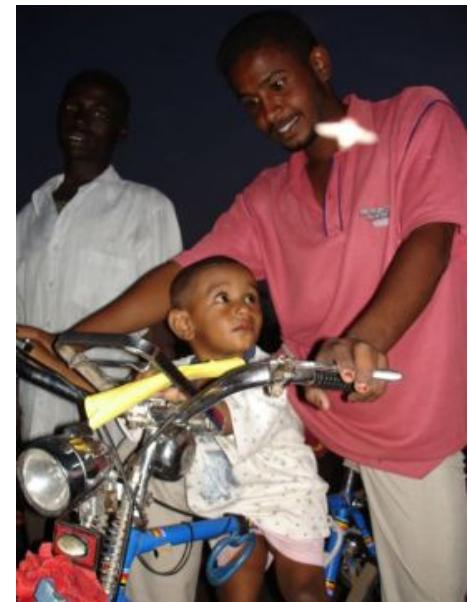
the morning and afternoon, as well as the high temperatures did make it a difficult day. On top of that we started a bit late due to some logistical problems, so by the time we came to the lunch stop we almost had had it and again stayed too long to recover from the morning, which accumulated that problem with the heat in the afternoon. It would have been better to stop at lunch and ride the last part in the truck, but we did not!

Fortunately we found soft drinks at a truck stop and had a nice discussion about our trip with the locals there. That motivated us to do the last km's and again fortunately Therese came with the small car to give us fresh water and a shower!

At the finish line we needed to do another 4km to the stadium, where there were people all over the place and were watched as we were refreshing ourselves with buckets of water. The local authorities surprised us with a dinner. How can we thank these people, we will sure miss them on the rest of this tour.

We slept not to good that night, to keep the local people away from our tents, there were guards and two spotlights illuminating the campsite. That and the wind that started to blow and initiated our alarm on the red boxes gave us perhaps only a couple of hours of real sleep.

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**Date: 09-feb-2006**

**Stage: Gedaref to desert camp**

Distance: 97 km

Time: 6h 47 m

GPS at destination: E35 °41 '46 " N 13 ° 22 '46 "

Country: Sudan

A nice surprise, there were plenty of km's of paved road out of Gedaref and we had almost a tail wind! The landscape is really changing now, as the vegetation starts to increase and we passed a camel convoy.

At the last checkpoint before we are reaching the border, we were again invited to have a drink from the local authorities. You almost would like to cycle back to Wadi as to enjoy their hospitality.

Camp was in the middle of nowhere, on soil that had big holes because of the lack of water, but fortunately our African Tour crew had bought some soft drinks and had setup the tent to sit in the shade. Tomorrow is the last day in Sudan, we have finished almost 2 of the 10 countries!



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