



Press Release.
02 April 2015

MINI ALL4 Racing takes impressive win in challenging conditions at 2015 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge // 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, round two: MINI ALL4 Racing secures top three podium places –Vladimir Vasilyev announced as winner

Munich (DE). Despite extreme temperatures – highs of forty-seven degrees Celsius during stages three and four of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge – and a severe sandstorm that resulted in the non-starting of the final day's Stage five racing, the determined challenge of MINI ALL4 Racing ended in an impressive way when Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) was awarded the all-important win. Further success for MINI ALL4 Racing came with all three podium positions occupied by MINI ALL4 Racing crews, and five in total within the final top ten result list.

The 25th edition of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge (27 March – 2 April) is the second round of the 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup and quickly proved to be a challenging race. Broken and high dunes combined with soft terrain and desert winds that saw MINI ALL4 Racing crews suffer from punctures, injury, a dramatic crash and unusual final result exclusion. However, the renowned reliability of MINI ALL4 Racing along with crew commitment still managed to bring home a stunning result...

With the final day's Stage 5 cancelled due to safety fears caused by a severe sandstorm, the final result looked set to be based on result standings after Stage 4. With this in mind, Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) was pencilled to take the win after leading the race from Stage 2 onwards. But this proved not to be the case when Nasser – winner of the 2015 Dakar Rally – was excluded from the final result.

The MINI ALL4 Racing was the car to beat at the 2015 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. After the field of competitors returned to Abu Dhabi City – lead by four of the X-raid built vehicles – the Stewards noticed the suspension-travel was slightly beyond regulation allowance on the car of Nasser Al-Attiyah. This violation was caused by the demanding terrain stressing suspension components beyond their regulation limit. Though the Stewards noted that the offence was not deliberate, they disqualified the MINI ALL4 Racing of the Qatari.

Speaking about the final result, Nasser said: "This is obviously one of the few lows in my racing career. All the hard work and effort from everybody concerned has not been rewarded – and this is a shame especially as the MINI ALL4 Racing proved once again it is a clear winner."





Despite the unfortunate news, celebration was still order of the day when Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge defending champion MINI ALL4 Racing Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) was promoted from second-place to overall winner. The position shift of one place in the final standings for all drivers still meant MINI ALL4 Racing crews occupying the all-important top three podium positions.

“It is not the way I like to take the win,” said Vladimir Vasilyev. “But it makes up for the problems we have had like the puncture. Everybody has had to endure the tough climate and conditions in this race and to finish means everybody is a winner. None more so than the MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles which performed so reliably.

Persistence and competent driving by MINI ALL4 Racing driver Erik Van Loon (NL) stood him in good stead with the overall result of second place although he wanted more. “It’s a pity the last stage was cancelled because we were enjoying the race and we wanted to show what more we could do. Everything was going well – the MINI ALL4 Racing, tyres, and us up front, nothing was alarming.”

Possibly the biggest surprise of the 2015 Abu Dhabi Challenge was newcomer to the MINI ALL4 Racing crew, Harry Hunt (GBR). The young Englishman drove to an amazing fourth place before being gifted with third position. This result is doubly remarkable because the race was his first time amongst the elite of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup. “It was an amazing experience but very tough. The car is better than I expected; I knew it was good but I didn’t expect it to be that good. I also didn’t expect the heat to be that bad. It’s been a massive learning experience.”

MINI ALL4 Racing driver Orlando Terranova (ARG) was rewarded with a deserved sixth place finish. “I felt good on some days and not so good on other days and this showed with the results. The condition of the dunes meant speed wasn’t always possible. The car is very powerful but it wasn’t possible to make consistent use of this power.”

Polish driver Adam Malysz was also at the wheel of a MINI ALL4 Racing for the first time in the desert and put in a sterling effort to finish in seventh place even though he crashed at one point. There was a competitor sat behind a dune who did not warn the other drivers. When Malysz crossed the dunes, he couldn’t avoid a crash and the MINI ALL4 Racing fell onto its side, but thankfully, nobody was injured. “With changing into the MINI ALL4 Racing, we have made a big step for the future. The car is almost perfect.”

Stephan Schott (DE) and his MINI ALL4 Racing suffered badly in Stage 4 when, at high speed, the car rolled several times before coming to



a stop. But even so this didn't reflect too badly considering what might have been – Schott finished the event in a remarkable 17th place.

Lucio Alvarez (ARG) unfortunately had to retire from the 2015 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge after Stage 2 when his co-driver had to seek medical assistance for a painful back. On site medical staff advised against further racing.

2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, round two: Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

MINI ALL4 Racing final positions at official race end:

Position	Driver	Co-driver
1st	Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)
2nd	Erik Van Loon (NLD)	Wouter Rosegaar (NLD)
3rd	Harry Hunt (GBR)	Andreas Schulz (DEU)
6th	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Bernardo Graue (ARG)
7th	Adam Malysz (POL)	Rafal Marton (POL)
17th	Stephan Schott (DE)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)

Race calendar: 2015 FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies.

20/02 – 22/02 Baja Russia
27/03 – 02/04 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge
18/04 – 24/04 Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar
10/05 – 17/05 Pharaons Rally
25/06 – 28/06 Italian Baja
24/07 – 26/07 Baja Aragón
13/08 – 16/08 HunGarian Baja
03/10 – 09/10 Rallye du Maroc
22/10 – 24/10 Baja Portalegre 500

Find more photos and videos in high resolution of the MINI ALL4 Racing participants on the BMW Media Website by [clicking here](#).

MINI Motorsport Communications



Media contact.

BMW Sports Communications

Danilo Coglianese

Telephone: +49-176-601-72405

E-mail: danilo.coglianese@bmwgroup.com

Media website: www.press.bmwgroup-sport.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MINImotorsport

YouTube: www.youtube.com/MINImotorsport

Twitter: www.twitter.com/MINImotorsport



BMW Sports Communications

Danilo Coglianese

Telephone: +49-176-601-72405

E-Mail: danilo.coglianese@bmwgroup.com