

Press Release
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MINI looks to extend top three lead in 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup with four MINI ALL4 Racing to compete at Pharaons Rally / 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, round four, Pharaons Rally – Vasilyev, Al-Attiah, Loon and Malysz head MINI ALL4 Racing line up

Munich (DE). Fresh from the success of a one-two finish at the Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar (18th-24th April), MINI with its MINI ALL4 Racing looks to extend its early dominance of the 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup. Four MINI ALL4 Racing are set to line up in the Egyptian desert for the start of the 2015 Pharaons Rally (10th-17th May), round 4 of the World Cup.

MINI ALL4 Racing cars presently fill the top three positions in the 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup. Driver Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) tops the points table with 123 points with Nasser Al-Attiah (QAT) in second place (60 points) and Erik Van Loon (NLD) third (52 points).

Preparation is everything with the World Cup. All three leading drivers are mentally and physically prepared for the Pharaons Rally – the third desert-based race in a row – and are joined by Adam Malysz (POL) for his third outing in a MINI ALL4 Racing. Together with the reliability and performance of the MINI ALL4 Racing, all the hard work of pre-season testing and technical preparation has evidently proven its worth.

Pre-season testing in the dunes of Morocco gives the drivers a small clue as to what lies ahead in the desert races. Each race is different – desert high winds are notorious for constantly changing the terrain; desert heat can be extreme and cockpit temperature rises in the slower sections. This can make driving an exhausting experience for all but the fittest of drivers. When faced with driving for hours in temperatures upwards of forty-five degrees Celsius fitness also plays a major part in keeping mentally alert to avoid hidden danger.

The Pharaons Rally follows the same challenging desert conditions of sand, dunes and tyre-shredding stones as the previous two races. During the Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar, the normally faultless racing tyres became victims of shards of savage hard rock. The need to stop and change a wheel is accepted in Cross Country Rally racing, but to stop three times in one stage of a race is physically demanding and time consuming. There is, however, another form of terrain the MINI ALL4 Racing cars and their crews will have to contend with.

'Fesh-fesh' is a form of sand so fine it is comparable to dust. Ordinarily if there is a thin layer of fesh-fesh then it is negotiable but will reduce the visibility of following vehicles. Sand dunes and sunshine can hide deep drifts of what resembles sand but is in fact deep fesh-fesh and this can play havoc with traction if hit.

Five legs of the race have been set, which starts in El Alamein (leg 1 - 12th May) against the backdrop of the Mediterranean Sea and ends in Giza, Cairo (16th May) home of the Great Pyramids. Total race distance will cover approx. 2,300 km. While fans and followers of Cross Country Rally World Cup will undoubtedly marvel at the historic sights the race route includes, sight-seeing for the crews is reserved before and after racing. During the race all eyes will be focused ahead and on cockpit instruments of the MINI ALL4 Racing.

The pairing of Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) and Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS) will no doubt be looking to better their second place at the Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar in their determination to remain at the top of the leader's board.

For Zhiltsov and the rest of the co-drivers, their navigational skills will be tested to the max. The Pharaon Rally organisers have already issued notice ahead of the event that there will be 'challenging' routes. Special mention was given to the third leg (14th May) from Tibniya to Farafra, which will consist of fast pistes, plateau, dunes and intense navigation... with fesh-fesh thrown in for good measure!

Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and co-driver Mathieu Baumel (FRA) showed exceptional form during the Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar, taking three wins from five stages. Part of Al-Attiyah's between-race relaxation included a cockpit swap when he was given opportunity to test a BMW M Performance Parts M4 DTM racing car at the German Oschersleben circuit. Understandably, Al-Attiyah was suitably impressed and surprised at the level of braking and grip given by this thoroughbred racing car.

The full line up of MINI ALL4 Racing crews competing in the Pharaons Rally (10th-17th May) – round four of the 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World – is as follows:

Driver	Co-driver	Car #
Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	301
Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)	Mathieu Baumel (FRA)	302
Erik Van Loon (NLD)	Wouter Rosegaar (NLD)	303
Adam Malysz (POL)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	307



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

20/02 – 22/02 Baja Russia
27/03 – 2/04 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
27/08 – 30/08 Baja Poland
03/10 – 09/10 Rallye du Maroc
22/10 – 24/10 Baja Portalegre 500

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

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