

Press release
08 April 2016

Two MINI ALL4 Racing crews on the podium at Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. Four MINI ALL4 Racing finish in top five.

Positive start for MINI and its MINI ALL4 Racing in the 2016 FIA Cross Country World Cup. Yazeed Al Rajhi takes second place overall. Mikko Hirvonen is third.

Munich. The MINI ALL4 Racing crew of Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER) completed the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, round two of the 2016 FIA Cross Country World Cup, with a hard-earned second place. Joining them on the rostrum in third place was the fellow MINI ALL4 Racing crew of Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and Michel Perin (FRA).

Further success for MINI came with four MINI ALL4 Racing completing the race within the top five, and a total of five of these iconic long-distance cross-country rally cars completed within the top ten.

The pairing of Yazeed Al Rajhi and Timo Gottschalk proved to be an exceptional one with a top five finish at the end of every stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. "I'm very happy," said Al Rajhi. "It is not an easy rally. There are a lot of risks in the dunes because of the steep drops and the sand. We managed it well and controlled our race to achieve the position."

Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) once again showed why he and co-driver Michel Perin (FRA) are a force to be reckoned with. Although this event was Hirvonen's longest desert race to date, he took a stage win (St 4) and finished third place overall.

Hirvonen: "Five days of only dunes and sand makes it a lot tougher than I thought. It has made me sweat more than I ever have. But still, it was a good experience and it has been a good week. To finish third is a good result."

For American Bryce Menzies, the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge was his first race at the controls of a MINI ALL4 Racing – and the first race he has had to contend with five days continuous racing in desert conditions. For these reasons alone it is little wonder he and co-driver Andreas Schulz (GER) were celebrating their fourth place at the end of this challenge race.

Menzies: "It was very challenging for the first couple of days; getting stuck twice. If it wasn't for these mistakes we would have done really well. Overall it felt really good to be in the MINI ALL4 Racing; learning what it can do and what it can take. Despite feeling ill for the last couple of days the race was a real blast."

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Jakub Przygonski (POL) with Tom Colsoul (BEL) in MINI ALL4 Racing #209 continued his learning curve of racing on four-wheels. The former motorcycle rally rider placed his MINI ALL4 racing in fifth place at the end of the five day race.

“I enjoyed the race a lot, said Przygonski, “because I learned a lot on how to race hard in the dunes. I have also learned the level of competition in the cars is the same as with the bikes and that it is very high. So yes, I am happy with the result.”

United Arab Emirates driver Sh. Khalid Al Qassimi and co-driver Khalid Al Kendi (Abu Dhabi Racing #203) were the fifth MINI ALL4 Racing crew to complete inside the top ten with a determined seventh place.

German duo Stephan Schott and Holm Schmidt staged a magnificent recovery after slipping back in the race order on day three of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. At the end of the final stage (St 5) they finished in 11th to secure 18th overall.

The Russian pair of Vladimir Vasilyev/Konstantin Zhiltsov (#201) became front runners amongst the MINI ALL4 Racing during the early stages of the rally. Unfortunately an incident mid-point of the race led to retirement.

2016 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge: MINI ALL4 Racing positions at race end

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
2nd	Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	204	X-raid Team	17:47:02 +32:13
3rd	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Perin (FRA)	205	X-raid Team	17:53:02 +38:13
4th	Bryce Menzies (USA)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	211	X-raid Team	17:59:04 +44:15
5th	Jakub Przygonski (POL)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	209	X-raid Team	18:06:33 +51:44
7th	Sh. Khalid Al Qassimi (ARE)	Khalid Al Kendi (ARE)	203	Abu Dhabi Racing	18:56:01 +1:41:12
18th	Stephan Schott (GER)	Holm Schmidt (GER)	210	X-raid Team	28:45:33 +11:30:44

Race calendar: 2016 FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies.

19/02 – 22/02 Baja Russia

02/04 – 7/04 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

17/04 – 22/04 Sealine Cross-Country Rally Qatar



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08/05 – 15/05 Pharaons Rally
23/06 – 26/06 Italian Baja
22/07 – 24/07 Baja Aragón
11/08 – 14/08 HunGarian Baja
25/08 – 28/08 Baja Poland
03/10 – 08/10 Rallye Oilibya du Maroc
21/10 – 23/10 Baja Portalegre 500

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

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