

Press release

15 July 2016

**Silk Way Rally 2016 – Vasilyev takes third spot.
Three MINI ALL4 Racing inside top five after six
days of action. A well-earned official rest day
enables MINI ALL4 Racing crews to rest... and
catch up on their sleep!**

Four MINI ALL4 Racing inside top ten as unknown, changing terrain, punctures, mud holes and turbulent weather fail to dampen the MINI ALL4 Racing family spirit.

Munich. Day seven of the 2016 Silk Way Rally from Moscow to Beijing was one of calm inside the Almaty bivouac as the Silk Way Rally from being the official rest day. For all competitors it was a chance to catch up on some much needed sleep before the first week of long distance rally racing and tomorrow's final day (Stage 7) of racing inside Kazakhstan's before crossing into China.

Yesterday's Stage 6, Balkhash to Almaty, was representative of the changing conditions all competitors have had to face on this historical Russia to China trade route. After the opening first special stage of 111 km and a further liaison of 70 km, bad weather warnings forced the emergency helicopter teams to remain on the ground. With competitor safety paramount, cancellation of the second special stage was the only option open to the rally organisers.

The end result of the shortened Stage 6 saw four MINI ALL4 Racing complete within the top ten. The MINI ALL4 Racing (#101) of Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) and Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS) was highest place in fourth. In the overall classification, they are now third.

Speaking about the rally so far and how he expects the remainder of the race to go, co-driver Konstantin Zhiltsov said: "It's been good but a tiring race so far. After crossing into another country it is plus-three hours. This doesn't leave a lot of time to prepare the road book for the next day, which we have to do but we also need to sleep. Two days ago I sleep for two hours! This night it will be more. We are in a good position for the second part of the race and ready to fight more.

"I believe the rally will really start in China. Because there will be two sandy days in the dunes. This will be new for us; new for everybody after the last week's racing. It is said they are high dunes with difficult sand. We will see what happens because if you are stuck in the dunes it could mean a minimum of 20 minutes lost. This means everything overall can change.

Just three minutes of race time behind and in fourth place overall is another crew of the MINI ALL4 Racing family, Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and Timo Gottschalk (GER).

“For me it is good but we have been unlucky this week,” said Al Rajhi. “Three punctures in one day were enough. We overtook cars and could have gained 18 minutes but the punctures meant losing 14 minutes. Because of high temperature in the long grass we lost another seven minutes. Bad luck! I’m hoping the bad luck will now leave. The second week will be a difficult week – long and tough. I hope there will be no surprises because we have had ours!”

Timo Gottschalk is the other half of this dynamic MINI ALL4 Racing duo and the experienced co-driver had this to say about the Silk Rally. “The first week was quite short because one stage was cancelled and another one shortened. But this is nobody’s fault. But still it was very demanding especially the fifth and longest stage of the rally. It’s been a long time ago that we had a stage like this.

“The first week was not easy for the co-pilot. A lot of difficult navigation; you had to be very careful and focussed not to miss a junction. Also for the drivers it was very demanding. The second part will be longer than the first one in terms of kilometres. The dunes will be difficult because nobody know how they look. But I think there will be some good desert stages and a beautiful landscape.”

Directly behind in fifth place overall is MINI ALL4 Racing #106 of Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ) and Anton Nikolaev (RUS) with a time difference of just 2min 8s.

“Unfortunately we lost out in the early stages,” said Rakhimbayev. “But now it is getting better and better for us even though it is getting tougher and tougher. The last two days were really hard. Next week will be a long race because it is really a marathon with such long stages. But we give it all.”

Another display of consistent rally driving and route navigation has led to MINI ALL4 Racing #109 of Bauyrzhan Issabayev (KAZ) and Vladimir Demyanenko (RUS) complete Stage 6 in fifth place. Currently they sit ninth overall with a determined view to reach the top five when inside China.

MINI ALL4 Racing #105 of Harry Hunt (GB) and Andreas Schulz (GER) completed Stage 6 in seventh. A possible higher placing was on the cards if it wasn’t for the fact Stage 6 was cut short. This outcome also stopped Hunt from breaking back into the top ten from his present 12th place overall.

Hunt: “The days have been harder than expected but really good. I’ve really enjoyed all of it. The road section’s liaison is really, really tiring. The second part of the rally will be really interesting with the dunes as we go into China. This is where time will be won or lost.”

Co-driver Andreas Schulz underlined Hunt’s view about how hard the Silk Way Rally is proving to be. “The road books are as thick as a bible and very precise. They are similar to a Baja. You have to stay concentrated for the whole day. It is a demanding rally – also for the co-pilot. For China, I also trust the road book. But I have never been to this area. Let’s see!”

The Silk way Rally 2016 resumes 16-07-2016 with Stage 7, Almaty to Bortala. This 581.57 km stage will see the competitors hit altitude of 2500-2600 metres. At the end of the stage the Silk Way Rally will leave Kazakhstan and venture into China.

For further information about the Silk Way Rally 2016, please visit:

www.silkwayrally.com

Silk Way Rally 2016: MINI ALL4 Racing Overall Classification

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
3 rd	Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	101	G-Energy Team	00:9min:50s
4 th	Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	103	X-raid Team	+00:12:50
5 th	Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ)	Anton Nikolaev (RUS)	106	Astana Motorsport	+00:14:58
9 th	Bauyrzhan Issabayev (KAZ)	Vladimir Demyanenko (RUS)	109	Astana Motorsport	+00:48:04
12 th	Harry Hunt (GB)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	105	X-raid Team	+00:56:12

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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