



Media Information
2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge
31 March 2017

2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge – Round 3, FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.

- **Three international crews from the MINI Family line up for the first long distance desert race of the season.**
- **Mohamed Abu Issa and co-driver Xavier Panseri on course to further their excellent start to the 2017 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.**
- **Stephan Schott and Andreas Schulz form an all-German crew.**
- **Russian duo Vladimir Valisyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov look to make it their third Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge title with MINI.**

Munich. Three MINI crews are primed for spectacular race action at this year's Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge – a race that MINI has won on four previous occasions (2011, 2013-2015). The 2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge Racing action starts with a Super Special Stage on Saturday 1st April.

Following a competitors' briefing at the impressive Yas Marina Circuit, the crews will make their way to the Al Forsan International Sports Resort to compete in Leg 1 (Super Special Stage) in full view of the crowds. This race will also ascertain the competitors' starting positions for Leg 2 the following day. The Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge ends with Leg 6 on Thursday 6th April.

Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) and co-driver Xavier Panseri (FRA) are on form following a successful third place outing at the 2017 Dubai International Baja (9-11 March). This latest dynamic duo from the MINI Family is growing in competitive strength from race to race and, as we all know, experience is a provider of good fortune. With the Desert Challenge being only their third outing together, another quality result from Abu Issa and Panseri is surely on the cards.

An all-German crew makes up the second MINI entry to the 27th running of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. Fresh from his impressive 15th place finish at the 2017 Dakar Rally, Stephan Scott takes to the desert with co-driver and compatriot Andreas Schulz – who also competed at this year's Dakar and finished a glorious sixth with Orlando Terranova (ARG) in the driving seat. When talking about experience gained in the seats of a rally car, then these two gentlemen can be considered veterans of desert racing.

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From Russia with a deep love for cross-country rally are Vladimir Vasilyev and his faithful friend and co-driver Konstantin Zhiltsov. They will be very keen to make up for the disappointment of not making the start of Round 2 (Dubai International Baja) due to personal reasons. The Russian pairing is very much likely to come off the line with determination in order to claim their third Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge title after taking the top step of the podium in 2014 and 2015.

2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge: MINI ALL4 Racing line up

Driver	Co-driver	#	Team
Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	203	G-Energy Team
Mohammed Abu Issa (QAT)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	209	X-raid Team
Stephan Schott (GER)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	210	X-raid Team

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