



Media Information  
Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge  
21 March 2018

## **Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2018 – Round 3, FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.**

- **MINI to contest Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2018 with six international crews.**
- **Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski in a MINI John Cooper Works Rally aims to maintain his lead position in the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.**
- **The MINI Family grows with three drivers competing at Abu Dhabi for the first time with MINI racing machinery.**

**Munich. The Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2018 is the third round of the 2018 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup and the first long distance rally of the this season’s championship. Race action starts on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March with a short Super Special Stage to determine the starting order for Special Stage 1 (SS1) – the first of five – on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March.**

A total of 1,308 kilometres will be raced off-road during five special stages held over five days. Stage 5 on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March will also be the last day of the event. Because of the challenging distance and desert terrain involved, the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge attracts top flight competition. It is also the event where MINI has taken the win four times in seven years.

Hoping to achieve another Abu Dhabi win for MINI is current leader of the 2018 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski (POL). He will, of course, be joined by his regular co-driver Tom Colsoul (BEL). This duo will once again be at the controls of a MINI John Cooper Works Rally, running under the banner of Orlen Team.

Also vying for glory in Abu Dhabi will be another longstanding MINI Family crew. Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and Timo Gottschalk (GER) are looking forward to their first official MINI outing of 2018 since the Dakar in January 2018. They too will be racing for the win in a MINI John Cooper Works Rally.

Another first outing from the MINI camp since Dakar 2018 – and first official race at a FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup event – is the impressive MINI John Cooper Works Buggy. This rear-wheel drive racing machine is there not just to capture top spot on the podium, but as part of its ongoing development programme.

Taking the wheel of this latest MINI cross-country racing car is Luc Alphand (FRA). A former downhill skier, he has already achieved notable success in off-road competition with, arguably, his best result being winner of the 2006 Dakar. Joining Alphand in the cockpit of the MINI John Cooper Works Buggy is experienced co-driver Andreas Schulz (GER).

Another driver taking charge of a MINI for the first time is Eugenio Amos (ITA). This former GT Endurance Series challenger made his switch to cross-country rally in 2015. In 2016 he completed his first Dakar on a side-by-side buggy and has continued to hone his rally-raid skills ever since. His first race under the wing of the MINI Family will be with respected co-driver Filipe Palmeiro (POR) and in a MINI ALL4 Racing.

Another newcomer to the MINI family – and his first ever long distance cross-country rally – is Kris Rosenberger (AUT). Although the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge will be Rosenberger's first outing in a MINI ALL4 Racing, he is a proficient rally and circuit driver in his home country of Austria, and has competed within WRC. Joining Rosenberger at the controls will be rally experienced Nicola Bleicher (AUT).

Back once again to maintain his love for desert cross-country action is the very experienced Stephan Schott (GER). At age 64, this Dakar veteran is a master in all areas of competition, from driving to co-driver and more; what is more he shows no sign in slowing down. Sitting next to this veteran of rally sport will be Portuguese co-driver Paulo Fiúza.

For more information about Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2018, please visit the host's event home page [here](#).

### Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2018: MINI line up

Driver	Co-driver	Auto	#	Team
Jakub Przygonski (POL).	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	302	Orlen Team
Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	306	X-raid Team
Luc Alphand (FRA)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	MINI John Cooper Works Buggy	310	X-raid Team
Stephan Schott (GER)	Paulo Fiúza (POR)	MINI ALL4 Racing	318	X-raid Team
Eugenio Amos	Filipe Palmeiro	MINI ALL4	320	X-raid

# MINI MOTORSPORT COMMUNICATIONS



(ITA)	(POR)	Racing		Team
Kris Rosenberger (AUT)	Nicola Bleicher (AUT)	MINI ALL4 Racing	322	X-raid Team

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