

Press release
05 April 2016

Four MINI ALL4 Racing in the top five after Stage 3 of Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. Vladimir Vasilyev in second place.

Round 2 of the 2016 FIA Cross Country World Cup: Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. Six MINI ALL4 Racing inside top ten.

Munich. The Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, round two of the 2016 FIA Cross Country World Cup is shaping up for an exciting finale. After Stage 3 of this prestigious desert race, four MINI ALL4 Racing are placed within the top five. To further underline the MINI ALL4 Racing's long distance desert capability, six MINI ALL4 Racing fill positions 2nd to 7th place.

At the end of St 3 (Al Ain Water) and four days of intense racing across the desert stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, the Russian pairing of Vladimir Vasilyev/Konstantin Zhiltsov (#201) have placed their MINI ALL4 Racing in second place. With two stages to go, it is still too early for last year's winner Vasilyev to think about a repeat win.

"Today showed the true nature of the race – the dunes were very difficult," said Vasilyev. "Thankfully there was no rain but I still drove carefully. Not because it is Konstantin's birthday today, but to maintain the fight."

Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER) in MINI ALL4 Racing #204 finished today's stage in fifth place and presently sit in third place overall. Despite Al Rajhi's desert experience, at one point he too fell victim to the sand, which resulted in a short delay.

Al Rajhi: "We got stuck and had to get out of the car to get free. This unfortunately lost us time. The last section in the smaller dunes helped because it was very fast..."

Jakub Przygonski (POL) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) take up fourth place in the race standings. Today's seventh at stage end does not reflect on the speed of this MINI ALL4 Racing crew. On the opening day's stadium Super Special Stage, Przygonski set the fastest time much to the delight of this amiable man from Poland.

Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) continued his experience of racing in the dunes with a hard fought third at the end of today's 280km race. Hirvonen and co-driver Michel Perin (FRA) are placed fifth overall. After two day's racing in cool and wet conditions, the desert heat returned but didn't thaw the ice-cool Finnish driver. "No drama! Nothing special," said Hirvonen. "We did get stuck several times but not heavy – just put it in reverse gear and we were fine."

Press release

Date 05 April 2016

Topic Four MINI ALL4 Racing in the top five after Stage 3 of Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge.

page 2

For American Bryce Menzies, the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge is his first full FIA long distance desert race and first time inside a MINI ALL4 Racing... although you wouldn't think so. With the experienced Andreas Schulz (GER) by his side, at the opening day's Super Special Stage they set the same time as pole setter Jakub Przygonski. Today's stage saw them cross the finish line in fourth to place them sixth overall.

United Arab Emirates driver Sh. Khalid Al Qassimi and co-driver Khalid Al Kendi (Abu Dhabi Racing #203) are the sixth of the MINI ALL4 Racing crews currently placed inside the top ten. Today's stage netted a valiant fourth and seventh overall despite Al Qassimi receiving a back injury during the previous stage.

There are now two stages of just over 490km total left to play out before the end of the 2016 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge on Thursday 7th April.

2016 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge: MINI ALL4 Racing positions after St3

Posit ion	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
2nd	Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	201	G-Energy Team	11:17:38.0 +15:19.0
3rd	Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	204	X-raid Team	11:24:32.0 +22:13.0
4th	Jakub Przygonski (POL)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	209	X-raid Team	11:32:47.0 +30:28.0
5th	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Perin (FRA)	205	X-raid Team	11:39:07.0 +36:48.0
6th	Bryce Menzies (USA)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	211	X-raid Team	11:40:17.0 +37:58.0
7th	Sh. Khalid Al Qassimi (ARE)	Khalid Al Kendi (ARE)	203	Abu Dhabi Racing	11:54:55.0 +52:36.0
28th	Stephan Schott (GER)	Holm Schmidt (GER)	210	X-raid Team	19:12:51.0 +8:10:32.0

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

08/05 – 15/05 Pharaons Rally

23/06 – 26/06 Italian Baja



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Topic Four MINI ALL4 Racing in the top five after Stage 3 of Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge.

page 3

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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