

Press release

12 January 2016

## **2016 Dakar Rally – Day 11, Stage 9: MINI ALL4 Racing take second, third and fifth at end of a reduced Stage 9 with Erik van Loon, Mikko Hirvonen and Al-Attiyah respectively.**

Savage desert heat of 50-degrees causes problems for bike and car competitors. Dakar organisers compelled to stop Stage 9 at 179km for safety reasons.

**Munich.** Day 11: Once again the weather conditions determined the result of a Dakar special stage. In the opening week, very early on, rain put paid to many a competitor's Dakar challenge. But today's weather in the Belen-Belen stage proved to be the opposite extreme in the desert arena. With competitors in the bike classes having problems with the severe desert floor heat, Dakar officials made the decision to stop the race at CP2 for safety reasons.

The result for Stage 9 was determined by the best time at CP2. For early flyers Erik van Loon (NLD) and Wouter Rosegaar (NLD) in the Van Loon Racing (#306) MINI ALL4 Racing, this gave them their best result so far this Dakar with a stage finish of second. This result now has the Dutch duo currently in eighth in the overall top ten.

“From the years we have competed at Dakar we knew today would be tough,” said Erik van Loon. “Today I started with very low tyre pressures to be better in the sand. But for the first few kilometres the stones were so big I was scared of punctures. It was very, very hot and the temperatures from all the sensors rose very high. I kept on driving the whole of the stage with a little margin – every time we slide the temperatures would rise. We could have easily gone the next 100km no problem. Unfortunately the bike guys were everywhere... under trees trying to find shade.”

Less than seven seconds behind Erik van Loon and in third position was a recharged Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) who, with co-driver Michel Périn (FRA) by his side, was already pushing hard in his AXION X-raid team MINI ALL4 Racing (#315). Today's result sees Hirvonen maintain fourth overall.

Hirvonen: “Today was what I was expecting from Dakar. It was made up of rough conditions and really hot because we had to go slow all of the time. There was also some tough navigation but Michel found all the waypoints OK. Today was the first day when it became physically demanding. We didn't get stuck in the tricky conditions and we also had to stop to clean the radiator. Otherwise it was a good day.”

Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and co-pilot Mathieu Baumel (FRA) also made good of their early start position and looked to be set to repeat yesterday's stage win.



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Unfortunately, as with the best laid plans, the early stage finish saw the leading AXION X-raid Team (#300) pass through CP2 in fifth, which stood as the stage result. Despite the stage shortness, Al-Attiyah retains third in the race standings.

Al-Attiyah: “We are so happy from the performance of the MINI ALL4 Racing and Mathieu did such a good job. We opened all the way but we stopped for six minutes to change two tyres. But it was still fantastic racing. I do not know if it was good or not good to stop the race. I’m sure the organisers know what is best. It was ok for us but for a lot of the amateurs it will be disastrous – a lot of people are, I’m sure, still in the stages.”

Joan ‘Nani’ Roma (ESP) and Alex Haro (ESP) also fell victim to the shortened race. The stage result of 12<sup>th</sup> now has the AXION X-raid Team crew (#304) lying in ninth after 11 hard days of Dakar.

“A hot day. A really hot day,” said Roma. “In this situation it is really tough. Everybody has problems with cooling and care and attention is much needed. Tomorrow is another day and we will see what happens.”

The early stage finish also meant the crew of Orlando Terranova (ARG) and co-driver Bernardo ‘Ronnie’ Graue (ARG) from AXION X-raid Team (#310) couldn’t capitalise on their desert experience to greatly reduce the overall time variation. They were ninth at today’s stage end to place them 14<sup>th</sup> overall.

Terranova: “Today was good. At the beginning the speed was very good and we caught Nani, but then we made a mistake with navigation and lost our way. After that we had a puncture. It was difficult but it was ok.”

Great Britain’s Harry Hunt has had an amazing first Dakar. His pairing with Andreas Schulz (GER) has proven to be a good one, resulting in consistent stage results. In their X-raid Team MINI ALL4 Racing (#323), they are presently in 12<sup>th</sup>, the second highest placed MINI ALL4 Racing privateer. But today proved to be the toughest day.

“Very hot. Very hard,” said Hunt. “The beginning was very rough in the river bed and then it got tight and twisty in deep sand and we took it a little easier. The rear right tyre had to have some air put in, but then it got too hot, so we had to stop to let some air out! Then ten kilometres from the end we got two punctures. A hard, hot day.”

The ORLEN Team (#327) crew of Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski (POL) Andrei Rudnitski (BLR) continue to battle it out in the upper sphere of the top 20. At present they are in 17<sup>th</sup> but have the target of a top fifteen finish in sight.

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“Never give up” seems to be the motto of all the MINI ALL4 Racing crews. The #351 X-raid Team duo of Nazareno Lopez (ARG) / Sergio Lafuente (URU) are still chasing hard for positions – as are Adam Malysz (POL) and co-driver Xavier Panseri (FRA) in MINI ALL4 Racing #325 (ORLEN Team). Both crews have had more than their share of the Dakar’s bad luck at this year’s event and continue to strive for glory.

### 2016 Dakar Rally: Day 11, Stage 9, Belén – Belén. MINI ALL 4 Racing standings:

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
3	Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)	Mathieu Baumel (FRA)	300	AXION X-raid Team	028:54:02 +00:14:38
4	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	315	AXION X-raid Team	029:14:14 + 00:34:50
8	Erik van Loon (NDL)	Wouter Rosegaar (NDL)	306	Van Loon Racing	030:07:29 +01:28:05
9	Joan ‘Nani’ Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	304	AXION X-raid Team	030:22:19 +01:42:55
12	Harry Hunt (GB)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	323	X-raid Team	030:40:43 +02:01:19
14	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Bernardo ‘Ronnie’ Graue (ARG)	310	AXION X-raid Team	30:57:40 +02:18:16
17	Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski (POL)	Andrei Rudnitski (BLR)	327	ORLEN Team	032:03:26 +03:24:02
18	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	313	X-raid Team	028:28:15 +02:26:31
32 (TBC)	Nazareno Lopez (ARG)	Sergio Lafuente (URU)	351	X-raid Team	046:18:29 +17:39:05
TBA	Adam Malysz (POL)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	325	ORLEN Team	TBA

Find more photos and videos in high resolution of previous Dakar participants in the MINI ALL4 Racing on the BMW Media Website by [clicking here](#)

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