

Media Information
Dakar Rally 2018
06 January 2018

Dakar Rally 2018 – Stage 1: Lima - Pisco

- All seven MINI crews complete Dakar opening stage
- Bryce Menzies leads the initial MINI charge in 4th position.
- Joan 'Nani' Roma completes the stage just 15 seconds behind Menzies in 5th place.

Munich. The first stage of the 40th edition of Dakar is complete with all seven MINI crews completing the 31km special stage. The #310 MINI John Cooper Works Buggy of Dakar rookies Bryce Menzies (USA) and Peter Mortensen (USA) was the fastest MINI in this year's race opener, closely followed by the #302 MINI John Cooper Works Rally of the experienced Joan 'Nani' Roma (ESP) and co-driver Alex Haro (ESP).

The crews were happy with the race start and took advantage of the hot, sandy terrain to establish a good feeling in their vehicles and prepare themselves for the next challenging 13 stages.

For American Bryce Menzies, today was the realisation of a long-held dream and he was delighted to have finished the opening stage in 4th place, within close reach of the leaders. Speaking of his first Dakar experience, Menzies said: "To start my first stage in Dakar was unbelievable; it's been my dream and goal to compete in this race so I had a lot of emotions and a lot of nerves, but once we started going it was a short 30km. The driving wasn't too hard, we had a lot of tracks in front of us and we made one mistake and had to come back to a waypoint, but other than that it was fine and I'm really looking forward to stage 2.

"I'm blown away with how the car handles. The new two-wheel drive MINI works really well and we have a lot more dune days, which this car works really good at so . I'm looking forward to the rest of the rally and I think we have a great shot at this. Hopefully, we can stay in the top five for the first week and be consistent, which I think with this car we can, and then from there we'll push."

Just behind the #310 MINI John Cooper Works Buggy at the stage finish was Joan 'Nani' Roma and co-pilot Alex Haro in 5th place in the all-wheel drive #302 MINI John Cooper Works Rally. Speaking after the stage, Roma said: "The stage was ok, it was really short but intense. It was not important to win today but it was difficult to

decide on setting the correct speed. The route was 100% sand and the visibility was horrible, but we drove well and had a really good feeling in the car.”

It was a learning stage for Mikko Hirvonen (FIN), who is still adapting to driving on sandy terrain, but he and co-driver Andreas Schulz (DEU) were happy with an 8th place finish in the #305 MINI John Cooper Works Buggy.

Hirvonen said: “Today’s stage was ok and I feel happy that we finally started. Driving in the sand is still the most difficult part for me so in a stage like today it’s important for me to find the best way to drive in the dunes. I am still a bit hesitant and braking in areas where I don’t need to so it’s a bit up and down and frustrating that I can’t go as fast as I would like, but the car felt good and I think it was a pretty good start for us.”

Just behind them in 9th position was the #312 MINI John Cooper Works Rally of Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski (POL) and Tom Colsoul (BEL). Przygonski said: “The short stage was good after the prologue, which was quite tricky because there were some really hard dunes to pass and a lot of spectators everywhere. The route was quite difficult and we had some small navigation issues but we finished and, for us, the race begins today.”

Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) led home the final three MINI crews, crossing the line in 12th place in the #317 MINI John Cooper Works Rally, ahead of Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and Timo Gottschalk (DEU) in 13th position and Orlando Terranova (ARG) and Bernardo Graue (ARG) in 14th.

Yazeed Al Rajhi: “It was a good first stage but we were concentrating on finding the feeling and not making mistakes. If you wanted to push you have to take risks and, for us, we see this is as a long race. The buggy is good but we didn’t try to attack today. I think tomorrow we will try to push a little bit and improve our position.”

Orlando Terranova: “It was a nice stage to warm up, get the feeling in the car and relax. We got rid of any stress today so that we are ready for the race.”

Competitors will remain in the sandy terrain of Pisco for tomorrow’s stage 2 of Dakar 2018, please visit the host’s event home page [here](#) for more information.

Dakar Rally 2018: MINI results after stage 1

Pos	Driver	Co-driver	#	MINI	Team	Time
4	Bryce Menzies (USA)	Peter Mortensen (USA)	310	MINI John Cooper Works Buggy	X-raid Team	000:22:29 +00:00:38
5	Joan 'Nani' Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	302	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	X-raid Team	000:22:44 +00:00:53
8	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Andreas Schulz (DEU)	305	MINI John Cooper Works Buggy	X-raid Team	000:23:27 +00:01:36
9	Jakub Przygonski (POL)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	312	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	Orlen Team	000:23:36 +00:01:45
12	Boris Garafulic (CHI)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	317	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	X-raid Team	000:24:14 +00:02:23
13	Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (DEU)	314	MINI John Cooper Works Buggy	X-raid Team	000:24:17 +00:02:26
14	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Bernardo Graue (Arg)	307	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	X-raid Team	000:24:24 +00:02:33

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