

Racing MIMI, National Champion of Super Rally

For the first time, an electric car has won a national title in competition with conventional cars – Horia Platona, the champion with Racing MIMI in Class 2A (front-wheel-drive cars) in the National Super Rally Championship.

Bucharest. Legendary victories in the Monte Carlo Rally or the Dakar Rally – the MINI image is defined by bold performances in motorsport and pioneering projects. Now, Racing MIMI, the first electric MINI racing car in history, after three years of work and adventure, makes a unique contribution from Romania to this tradition.

Racing MIMI, prepared by the Engage Engineering team from Romania, has achieved a highly significant historic milestone: it is the first electric car to win a national title in direct competition with internal combustion engine cars – a victory in Class 2A (front-wheel drive) in the National Super Rally Championship.

The most beautiful victories are those achieved against formidable competition. Racing MIMI was raced by Horia Platona directly against experience drivers with high-performance internal combustion engine cars, factory produced models such as R2, Rally 4, or TCR cars. This meant that the main competitors had much more powerful cars (even double the power of the MINI Cooper SE) and a significantly better power-to-weight ratio. On the other hand, Racing MIMI benefited from exemplary preparation by Engage Engineering, including unique developments such as the limited-slip differential, significant weight reduction, and additional cooling systems. It is worth noting that Racing MIMI remains a MINI Cooper SE, with the electric propulsion system, battery, and motor, in its street version, with a maximum power of 184 HP.

The closely contested battle ensured a spectacular show. The class champion was decided in the last timed round of the competition, with Horia and Racing MIMI finishing in first place in the standings with a total of 89 points, just 1 point ahead of second place.

The National Super Rally Championship hosted a total of six stages held on street circuits in cities across Romania. After five races with two third-place finishes, Racing MIMI was consistently in the top three in the Class 2A standings. Before the final stage, it was in third place, six points behind the leader. The competition was tight, and theoretically, at least four drivers had a chance at the title. In the final confrontation of the season, in the UniCredit Leasing Trophy in Bucharest on November 4th, Horia needed a strong performance for victory.

The race in Bucharest was marked by very difficult weather conditions with many hours of rain. This mitigated the power differences and favored highly maneuverable cars, providing an opportunity for the Racing MIMI team. The practice sessions, prematurely interrupted due to repeated accidents and difficult conditions, ended with an extraordinary performance by Horia - third place in the overall standings. It's worth noting that Horia was one of the few drivers to complete two practice rounds. Due to the water-covered track, there were several accidents and retirements, with open-top models being the most affected. Any result seemed possible.

The competition rounds took place with the rain gradually decreasing in intensity, although conditions remained very difficult. The improving weather led to an increased pace of the competition. This put more pressure on the drivers and added excitement for the fans.

Horia Platona adopted a slightly cautious pace in the first round and pushed harder in the second, achieving a very valuable performance. His time of 2:29.204 secured second place in the class and ninth place overall, surpassing many significant competitors with highly competitive models – from two-seaters that had the most trouble on the wet, to Mitsubishi Lancer Evo, Audi R8, or Ferrari 458.

This was Racing MIMI's best result in the history of the championship, which earned them their first points in the Open standings and a second-place ranking in the class. The result was enough for the championship title with only one point lead.

Art for Motorsport

At the last race of the season, Racing MIMI presented another first – a new art project on the roof developed in collaboration with Galateca Gallery. Throughout the project's history, it has received several roof art projects, which were then showcased in motorsport competitions, earning it the title of "the fastest art gallery in the world." This time, MIMI served as a canvas for artist Mihai Zgondoiu. For the project, Mihai used spray and markers in a language reminiscent of street art. The color scheme was inspired by the car, dominated by blue in the front, with yellow decorative elements and orange decals for the driver's name and competition number. The artwork also featured concepts and ideas from Mihai's artistic repertoire, including flames evoking energy in competitions and stylized extraterrestrial forms with large, elongated vertical eyes, alluding to the car's unique presence in races.

Racing MIMI's Partners

Textar is the latest partner to collaborate with the Racing MIMI team. Since 1913, Textar has been one of the most important brake product suppliers for a wide range of cars. Now, the company supports the MIMI team on one of the few components that wear out and require regular service.

Racing MIMI is supported in 2023 by a range of strong partners. UniCredit Leasing, a financier of BMW Financial Services and MINI Financial Services, with significant involvement in Romanian motorsport, is the main partner of the project. Michelin supports the project and equips MIMI with Michelin Pilot Sport and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup tires for various demonstrations and street competitions. Renovatio, with e-charge, the largest charging station network in Romania, provides charging solutions.

Starting this year, Samsung becomes an important partner, supporting MIMI's communication, while the brand's equipment helps document the project with spectacular photo and video materials using Samsung S23's high-performance cameras.

Enviro, a partner of HBK and Brüel & Kjær companies, is a Romanian company that offers professional sound measurement services. This partnership aims to explore the theme of electric motorsport and its impact, especially in the context of urban competitions.

About Racing MIMI

The first electric MINI in history entered its third competitive season. Built on a production model, using the standard motor and battery, MIMI received a series of performance enhancements from the Engage Engineering team in Braşov, marking the improvements with the name "Racing MIMI

EVO." These include a substantial weight reduction of approximately 230 kg (including fiberglass doors and frameless plexiglass), additional carbon dioxide ice cooling system, and a front limited-slip differential developed in collaboration with Drexler.