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2016 Dakar Rally – Day Six, Stage 5: Al-Attiyah and Baumel charge across the mountains to Bolivia and sit comfortably in fourth place. Hirvonen maintains seventh place.

Bad weather conditions reduce the final leg distance. Terranova poised to break into top ten – three more MINI ALL4 Racing crews on course to join him.

Munich. Day Six (Stage 5) saw the Dakar Rally competitors race at the highest altitude ever known in the history of the Dakar on their way to crossing the border into Bolivia.

For the leading MINI ALL4 Racing (#300) crew of Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and co-pilot Mathieu Baumel (FRA), Stage 5 also brought some fast and furious racing. After maintaining a constant third through six of the eight waypoints, the final stretch to the finish point eventually left Al-Attiyah and his AXION X-raid Team MINI ALL4 Racing in fourth place at the line. This result now places the defending Dakar champions fourth overall with eight stages remaining.

“We do our best and try to push,” said Al-Attiyah. “But it really was not easy to follow because the front car is quite fast. But we are happy with what we do until now. There’s still a long way to go and I hope to have a good result. We will continue to push and push.”

As expected, the overnight Marathon stage, where no outside technical assistance is allowed, caused no problems for the race-proven MINI ALL4 Racing cars. Once again Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and co-driver Michel Périn (FRA) in the #315 MINI ALL4 Racing set out across the high mountainous landscape to strengthen their position in the overall standings.

True to form Hirvonen drove a perfectly executed race to consolidate his seventh place overall. If there was a possibility of making up a place then it was lost with the enforced reduction in distance from waypoint 8 to the finish line. To shorten the last section to 321km was, in fact, a good decision by Dakar officials because serious storm movements at the finish line could have played havoc with what was a good day’s competition.

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Hirvonen: “I’m quite happy with this stage. We had one puncture and lost a little time and then we stayed a long time in the dust of other competitors. So we could have, I think, been two or three minutes faster. I’m definitely driving more bravely than yesterday. Learning, improving... it all makes for a better stage. I enjoyed today’s stage the most so far.”

The other two AXION X-raid Team crews also had reason to smile after Stage 5. The Argentinean duo of Orlando Terranova / Bernardo 'Ronnie' Graue (#310) pushed hard to pick up yet more positions. Completing Stage 5 in 10th now puts this determined crew 12th overall.

Terranova: "A nice stage that started on nice roads. We pushed and caught 'Nani' and after 40 kilometres I started to get a headache from the altitude. Then Nani pushed hard and it was more difficult for us from there on. The car is in one-piece, which is important because of the long day tomorrow."

Spanish duo Joan 'Nani' Roma / Alex Haro (#304) also set about making up lost ground. By taking on the thin mountain air, rocks and undulating surface they completed Stage 5 in 12th. This effort saw them lift up the leader board from 15th to 12th overall. This was a good result considering Roma felt the effects of the high altitude.

"Today I felt really bad," said Roma. "I started with a lot of pain in my head and the first 50 kilometres I drove really bad. I didn't drive well; I didn't feel the car or feel like myself. It was so much pain it was unbelievable. But then I take one tablet and only for the last 100 kilometre I drive well. But no, I don't feel happy about today."

Threatening to break into the top ten alongside Terranova is a charging group of MINI ALL4 Racing privateers. Dutch crew Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar (Van Loon Racing #306) are comfortable in 13th, just 3:26m ahead of Jakub 'Kuba' Przygonski (POL) and Andrei Rudnitski (BLR) of ORLEN Team (#327). Dakar first-timer Harry Hunt (GBR) is gaining in Dakar experience with every kilometre and currently lies 14th overall.

2016 Dakar Rally: Day Six, Stage 5, San Salvador de Juyjuy - Uyuni, 638km. MINI ALL 4 Racing standings:

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
4	Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)	Mathieu Baumel (FRA)	300	AXION X-raid Team	013:31:41 +00:14:16
7	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	315	AXION X-raid Team	013:40:49 + 00:23:24
12	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Bernardo "Ronnie" Graue (ARG)	310	AXION X-raid Team	014:10:56 +00:53:31
13	Erik van Loon (NDL)	Wouter Rosegaar (NDL)	306	Van Loon Racing	014:11:41 +00:54:16
14	Jakub 'Kuba' Przygonski	Andrei Rudnitski	327	ORLEN Team	014:15:01 +00:57:36

	(POL)	(BLR)			
15	Harry Hunt (GB)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	323	X-raid Team	014:15:14 +00:57:49
17	Joan 'Nani' Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	304	AXION X-raid Team	014:29:04 +01:11:39
18	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	313	X-raid Team	014:30:36 +01:13:11
20	Adam Malysz (POL)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	325	ORLEN Team	0014:39:54 +01:22:29
TBA	Nazareno Lopez (ARG)	Sergio Lafuente (URU)	351	X-raid Team	

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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