

Press release

05 January 2016

2016 Dakar Rally – Day Three, Stage 2: Hirvonen leads MINI ALL4 Racing charge despite difficult weather conditions.

Third day of 2016 Dakar Rally ends with eight MINI ALL4 Racing in top 20. Hirvonen and Al-Attiyah sit comfortably in 5th and 8th position respectively.

Munich. Day Three (Stage 2) of the 38th edition of the Dakar Rally ended with Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) living up to his nickname of the “Flying Finn” by placing his AXION X-raid Team (#315) MINI ALL4 Racing in fifth position overall.

Hirvonen and co-driver Michel Périn (FRA) started the day’s racing from seventh place, the result of the shortened Prologue event (Day One). This result stood after the cancellation of Day two (Stage 1) due to severe weather conditions. Hirvonen now sits only 3:05m behind leading driver Sebastien Loeb.

A smiling Hirvonen said: “Happy. I’m really happy with the way it went. We didn’t make any mistakes or anything and the speed was quite ok – no risks at all. But it was difficult in a way because I was so frustrated not to have any pace notes; I still have to get used to this. We have a good road position for tomorrow and, at speeds like this, I feel we can carry on forever.”

The second of 11 MINI ALL4 Racing crews to finish Stage 2 was the AXION X-raid Team MINI ALL4 Racing (#300) of defending Dakar champions Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and co-pilot Mathieu Baumel (FRA). A puncture and getting held up by mud slowed their progress and they currently lie in eighth place.

“The stage was difficult. It was not easy,” said Al-Attiyah. “There was a lot of mud and a lot of water in one place and we got stuck. We managed to get out very quick, say, after three minutes. Then afterwards we got a puncture. But it is ok; I’m not worried. Tomorrow we can start in a good position and the road will be clean for us and we try to push to win a good time.”

The previous day’s (Stage 1) weather that denied the first full day of racing also became a major factor in Stage 2. What was originally planned as the longest distance to cover became a shortened stage of just 387km due to treacherous terrain conditions. From the start it was obvious the muddy routes would be troublesome.

Argentinean pairing Orlando Terranova and Bernardo ‘Ronnie’ Graue (#310) also became victims of deep mud. It was a stroke of bad luck and very difficult to get free and carry on without losing too much time against the closely spaced competitors. Despite the mud they eventually got free to finish the day in 28th.

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Talking about the day, a thoughtful Terranova said: “At 200km we were stuck in the mud and from this moment we were fighting to get out. It was difficult. Another X-raid driver, Malysz, gave us a pull and we continued. Not such a good start...”

The MINI ALL4 racing of Joan ‘Nani’ Roma’ (ESP) and Alex Haro (ESP) (#304) also became victims off the treacherous mud. Unfortunately, for them, it caused a major delay in proceedings and they slipped to 44th place by end of play.

“Not so good a start for me,” said Roma. “When I arrive at the problem area there is one car stopped on the left so I go to the right on the grass but there are so many people there. I turn left and get stuck. I lose 40 minutes. It’s like that...”

Careful and controlled racing by experienced Dutch privateers Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar (Van Loon Racing) placed them in 13th place closely followed by the remaining fellow MINI ALL4 Racing privateers.

Day four (Stage 3) of the 2016 Dakar will see the competitors take to mountainous sections on their way to the next stage end at San Salvador De Jujuy. A total of 663km are to be covered, of which 314km are the Special Stage.

2016 Dakar Rally: Day Three, Stage 2, Villa Carlos Paz – Termas Rio Hondo, 387km (reduced distance). MINI ALL 4 Racing standings:

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
5	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	315	AXION X-raid Team	003:48:51 + 00:03:05
8	Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)	Mathieu Baumel (FRA)	300	AXION X-raid Team	003:50:04 +00:04:18
13	Erik van Loon (NDL)	Wouter Rosegaar (NDL)	306	Van Loon Racing	003:52:56 +00:07:10
15	Adam Malysz (POL)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	325	ORLEN Team	003:57:53 +00:12:07
16	Harry Hunt (GB)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	323	X-raid Team	003:58:06 +00:12:20
17	Jakub ‘Kuba’ Przygonski (POL)	Andrei Rudnitski (BLR)	327	ORLEN Team	003:58:13 +00:12:27
19	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	313	X-raid Team	004:01:46 +00:16:00
20	Nazareno Lopez (ARG)	Sergio Lafuente (URU)	351	X-raid Team	004:02:00 +00:16:14
28	Orlando Terranova	Bernardo “Ronnie” Graue	310	AXION X-raid Team	004:15:22 +00:29:36

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	(ARG)	(ARG)			
44	Joan 'Nani' Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	304	AXION X-raid Team	004:32:34 +00:46:48
	Stephan Schott (GER)	Holm Schmidt (GER)	331	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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