

Media Information  
2017 Dakar Rally  
04 January 2017

## **2017 Dakar Rally – Stage 3: San Miguel de Tucumán – San Salvador de Jujuy, 780 km**

- Four MINI cars in top ten overall
- Fourth place finish in Stage 3 for Hirvonen
- Top 10 finishes for Terranova, Al Rajhi and Przygonski

**Munich. Day three of the 2017 Dakar Rally signalled the first off-terrain stage in this year’s event, with challenges added by the increase in altitude to more than 5,000 metres. Unpredictable weather, ranging from scorching temperatures reaching an estimated 36 degrees to rain at 4,000 metres, provided further tests for the drivers and navigators as they raced towards today’s finish line in San Salvador de Jujuy.**

It was a long day, with the first cars starting to line-up at 9.35am to start the 780km stage, but it was a day that proved successful for the MINI competitors. X-raid Team’s Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and Michel Périn (FRA) in the number 303 MINI John Cooper Works Rally car enjoyed a particularly strong performance, competing within the top three for much of the stage before securing a fourth place finish. Today’s result moves the pair into 4<sup>th</sup> place overall in the standings and is a reminder of the potential demonstrated by the Finnish driver during his Dakar debut with MINI last year.

A satisfied Hirvonen said: “Today was really good; everything was working perfectly. Michel did a great job in the beginning so we had a really good run. It was a little bit technical and twisty in places but I feel like that’s the best place for us to fight against others so I really pushed like hell in the corners. We have the mountains back in Finland so the altitude was no problem but when we are above the 5,000 metres there was thunderstorms and a little bit of snow. It was really beautiful view. Everything went well but we have to go day by day to secure overall success.”

Fellow X-raid Team competitors Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER) made a strong start to the day in the MINI John Cooper Works Rally #306, climbing to third place by the end of WP1. However, with close



competition from a number of other cars, the pair slipped back later in the stage to finish a respectable 7<sup>th</sup> place and maintain 6<sup>th</sup> position overall.

Talking about Stage 3, Al-Rajhi said: “It was very difficult for us. I was sick and that made it difficult to focus and drive. I just kept trying and hoping that we would finish...and we finished!”

Another two MINI cars joined Hirvonen and Al Rajhi in the overall top 10 by the end of today’s stage. Following disappointment at their stage 2 performance yesterday, Orlando Terranova (ARG) and co-driver Andreas Schulz (GER) in the MINI John Cooper Works Rally #308 put their experience to good use today. A strong attack from the pairing saw them clinch a 6<sup>th</sup> place finish to climb to 8<sup>th</sup> on the overall leader board.

Terranova: “It was a true Dakar stage today. We started a little bit behind but we had good pace and managed to finish in a strong position.”

Jakub Przygonski (POL) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) in the MINI ALL4 Racing #316 climbed to 9<sup>th</sup> in the standings after placing 10<sup>th</sup> in today’s stage. A challenging WP1 proved testing for the pair, but they maintained focus to improve consistently throughout the day to achieve their ambition of breaking into the top ten.

Przygonski: “It was quite a long and tough stage with hard terrain and difficult navigation at the beginning. There was a lot of big holes and stones which slowed down the pace a little but then the stage changes to be more WRC style and that part was really fun in the car.”

Improvements were also seen from X-raid Team’s Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) and Xavier Panseri (FRA) who continue to learn during their first race together. They piloted the #322 MINI ALL4 Racing to 16<sup>th</sup> place today, moving them up to 15<sup>th</sup> overall.

Stage 3 also proved successful for Boris Garafulic (ARG) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) who finished in 14<sup>th</sup> position, to climb to 17<sup>th</sup> in the standings.

Sylvio deBarros (BR) and Rafael Capoani (BR) crossed the line just behind them in 15<sup>th</sup> position to climb eight places in the overall standings to 18<sup>th</sup>.

Stephan Schott (GER) and Paulo Fiuza (POR) also improved today, climbing eight places to 20<sup>th</sup> overall.

Tomorrow's (05-01-2017) shorter Stage 4 starts in San Salvador de Jujuy and completes in Tupiza, a total distance of 521 km.

**2017 Dakar Rally: MINI Family standings overall after Stage 3.**

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
4	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	303	X-raid Team	07:04:34 +00:09:38
6	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	306	X-raid Team	07:10:13 +00:15:17
8	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	308	X-raid Team	07:16:25 +00:21:29
9	Jakub Przygonski (POL)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	316	ORLEN Team	07:22:33 +00:27:37
15	Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	322	X-raid Team	07:55:11 +01:00:15
17	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	314	X-raid Team	07:58:53 +01:03:57
18	Sylvio de Barros (BR)	Rafael Capoani (IT)	339	X-raid Team	08:04:34 +01:09:38
20	Stephan Schott (GER)	Paulo Fiuza (POR)	325	X-raid Team	08:26:26 01:31:30

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