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## MINI USA AND JOHN COOPER WORKS RACE TEAM PODIUM AT AMERICAN RALLY ASSOCIATION 2026 NATIONAL SEASON OPENER

- *MINI's two-car factory-backed team make strong showing at Sno\*Drift Rally kicking off ARA season and new chapter in brand's rally legacy.*

**Woodcliff Lake, NJ – February 11, 2026** – [MINI USA](#) and the John Cooper Works Race Team secured a podium finish this past weekend February 6-7 at the [Sno\\*Drift Rally](#) in Atlanta, Michigan, the American Rally Association's ([ARA](#)) 2026 season opener.

Competing on challenging icy and snow-covered stages, the MINI John Cooper Works 2-Door driven by Cristian Perocarpi and Carlos Schrunder in the Open 2 Wheel Drive class (O2WD) placed second in-class and 10<sup>th</sup> overall in the National Championship. In the Limited 4 Wheel Drive class (L4WD) driving the MINI John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4, the team of Luis Perocarpi and Mark Wells secured fourth in-class and 14<sup>th</sup> overall in the National Championship.

"We're excited to be racing with MINI once again - this time making history with the brand's US debut in rally." said Luis Perocarpi, team owner, LAP Motorsport. "Both the John Cooper Works 2-Door and the John Cooper Works Countryman ALL were sure-footed on the snow-covered and icy stages, and we're looking forward to keeping the momentum going for the next rally event in March."

MINI USA campaigning with the John Cooper Works Race Team in ARA Rally marks a new and expanded direction of MINI's motorsports presence in North America, building on regional rally appearances in 2025, and reconnecting the brand with its legendary rally roots.

### New MINI Models Show Competitive Stripes

The two MINI vehicles competing in the 2026 ARA season include the [John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4](#) in the Limited 4 Wheel Drive class (L4WD) and the iconic [MINI John Cooper Works 2-Door](#) in the Open 2 Wheel Drive class (O2WD). With initial safety-oriented modifications and ARA classes allowing minimal modifications from factory components, MINI's core performance capabilities shine through.

Underscoring MINI's adventurist spirit, the new 2026 MINI Countryman is larger, offering new levels of versatility and all-road capabilities in the compact SUV category. The MINI John Cooper Works 2-Door represents MINI's iconic appearance, size, and performance, with a short wheelbase and "go-kart" handling.

### **Dealer Technicians Join the Pit Crew**

Adding a unique aspect to the program, the LAP Motorsports team will be supported by highly skilled technicians from the MINI dealer network who will be given the exciting opportunity to serve as pit crew at select races throughout the season.

To recognize top performing Technicians from within the dealer network, four (4) MINI Dealer Technicians will be given the opportunity to join the excitement and crew for each race alongside the LAP crew. This hands-on involvement brings MINI's retail network directly into the competition, reinforcing the brand's commitment to performance and the enthusiastic community that supports it.

### **A Heritage Rooted in Rally Success**

MINI has a storied rally history defined by the iconic Mini Cooper S dominating the 1960s with its agile handling and surprising wins over more powerful cars. Key successes include victories in the Monte Carlo Rally in 1964, 1965, and 1967, and dominance in the 2010s with the MINI ALL4 Racing in the Dakar Rally.

The classic Mini, originally designed to be both a space-efficient and fuel-efficient city car by Alec Issigonis, was transformed into a rally powerhouse by John Cooper. Its small size, front-wheel drive, and "go-kart" handling allowed it to outperform much more powerful V8 rivals on tight, icy mountain passes.

### **MINI and LAP Motorsports**

MINI USA has had a long-standing relationship with LAP Motorsports, founded and operated by Luis Perocarpi. Since 2015, LAP Motorsports and MINI USA have collaborated with the MINI John Cooper Works Race Team competing in IMSA ST and more recently in SRO and TC Americas class of the World Challenge series.

With a winning legacy behind the wheel of MINIs on the track, LAP Motorsports and MINI USA have set sights on new racing opportunities with rally, which offers the thrill of competition to new audiences, while remaining authentic to MINI's motorsport heritage.

### **The 2026 ARA Season**

The 2026 ARA season includes a full competitive calendar of events from February through October 2026.

This high-performance racing event is comprised of two- and four-wheel drive, road-legal cars racing on snow and ice-covered sections of closed forest roads in a time-based competition. The event attracts upwards of fifty competition cars each year from across the United States and Canada.

The American Rally Association (ARA) is the largest rally organization in the United States and promotes the country's only cohesive, nationwide competition for the sport of stage rally: In addition to the recent **Sno\*Drift Rally**, the 2026 ARA National Championship season includes the following events:

- **Rally in the 100 Acre Wood** March 13-14, 2026, Salem/Potosi, Missouri
- **Olympus Rally** April 17-19, 2026, Shelton, Washington
- **Southern Ohio Forest Rally** June 11-13, 2026, Chillicothe, Ohio
- **Rally Colorado** July 18-19, 2026, Rangely, Colorado
- **Ojibwe Forests Rally** August 27-29, 2026, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota
- **Overmountain Rally Tennessee** September 18-19, 2026, Newport, Tennessee
- **Lake Superior Performance Rally** October 9-10, 2026, Marquette, Michigan

To learn more about the ARA and its partners, go to  
[www.AmericanRallyAssociation.org](http://www.AmericanRallyAssociation.org)

#### About MINI in the US

MINI is an independent brand of the BMW Group. In the United States, MINI USA operates as a business unit of BMW of North America, LLC, located in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey and includes the marketing and sales organizations for the MINI brand. The authorized MINI USA dealer organization is represented by a network of 104 MINI full passenger car sales and service dealers located throughout the US. MINI USA began selling vehicles in the U.S. in 2002 with the introduction of the MINI Cooper and MINI Cooper S Hardtops. Since then, the MINI Brand in the U.S. has grown to encompass a model range of five unique vehicles.

**Journalist note:** Media information about MINI and its products is available to journalists on-line at [www.press.bmwgroup.com/usa](http://www.press.bmwgroup.com/usa).

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