



Andrew Cutler
Head of Corporate Communications, MINI USA
201.307.3784
Andrew.Cutler@miniusa.com

MINI USA AND JOHN COOPER WORKS RACE TEAM TAKE ON “KUBOTA OLYMPUS RALLY,” THIRD ROUND IN THE 2026 ARA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

- *MINI’s two-car factory-backed team heads to Shelton, Washington for “Kubota Olympus Rally” round three-of-eight in the 2026 ARA season.*
 - *Next event for strong showing in MINI’s first ARA season.*

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – April 16, 2026 – [MINI USA](#) and the John Cooper Works Race team are preparing for the next competition in the 2026 [American Rally Association](#) (ARA) National Championship. The 2026 “[Kubota Olympus Rally](#)” will take place on April 17–19, in Shelton, Washington, as a premier event in the ARA National Championship Series. Known for its technical and high-speed stages in the scenic forests of the Olympic Peninsula, this three-day rally features over 200 competitive miles across 18 stages, and 1,250 feet of elevation change.

MINI USA and the John Cooper Works Race Team started the season strong, securing a class podium finish at the [Sno*Drift Rally](#) February 6-7 in Atlanta, Michigan, the American Rally Association’s (ARA) 2026 season opener and MINI’s debut in ARA National competition. This was followed by the two-vehicle team competing at the “[Rally in the 100 Acre Wood](#)” in March.

MINI USA and long-standing partner [LAP Motorsports](#) are campaigning this year’s ARA season with two rally-prepped vehicles: a MINI John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4 in the Limited 4 Wheel Drive class (L4WD), and an iconic MINI John Cooper Works 2-Door in the Open 2-Wheel Drive class (O2WD).

The brand’s U.S. competition in ARA rally marks a new and expanded direction of MINI’s motorsports presence in North America, building on successful regional rally appearances in 2025, and reconnecting the brand with its legendary rally roots.

“We’re looking forward to taking on the rally stages this weekend at the ‘Olympus Rally’ continuing our strong first-season showing.” said [Luis Perocarpi](#), team owner, LAP Motorsport. “Both the John Cooper Works 2-Door and the John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4 demonstrated their performance and toughness in the first two rally

events of the ARA season, and we look forward to continuing the momentum on what may be some of the most technical and challenging stages of the season.”

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

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. 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.

Following the Kubota Olympus Rally, April 17-19, the 2026 ARA National Championship season continues with the following events:

- **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, and follow live, up-to-the-minute race updates at <https://www.americanrallyassociation.org/live>.

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 105 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.

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