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MINI USA AND JOHN COOPER WORKS RACE TEAM COMPETE AT “OVERMOUNTAIN RALLY,” SEVENTH ROUND IN THE 2026 ARA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP.

- *MINI’s two-car factory-backed team head to Newport, TN for the “Overmountain Rally” round seven-of-eight in the 2026 ARA season.*

Woodcliff Lake, NJ – September 17, 2026 – [MINI USA](#) and the John Cooper Works Race team kick off the next competition in the 2026 [American Rally Association](#) (ARA) National Championship at the 2026 “[Overmountain Rally](#)” September 18-19, in Newport Tennessee where competitors face twisting and rugged gravel trails of the Cherokee National Forest.

Covering 100 competition miles and 160 transit miles, the rally is known for stages that include smooth-to-rough gravel, clay, hard-packed dirt, and brief tarmac sections featuring steep elevation changes and tight, technical hairpins. A feature of the Overmountain Rally is the high-banked Newport Speedway, which serves as the central paddock and hosts a stadium-style, mixed-surface Super Special stage under the lights.

MINI USA and long-standing partner [LAP Motorsports](#) have been 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).

For their first season in ARA National competition, MINI USA and the John Cooper Works Race Team have shown success in what has been a highly competitive field, securing a class podium finish at the ARA 2026 season opener [Sno*Drift Rally](#) in February and at the “[Rally Colorado](#),” in July.

For the Overmountain Rally, the John Cooper Works Race team will feature the team of David and Drew Quillen in the MINI John Cooper Works 2 Door and the team of Luis Perocarpi and Mark Wells in the MINI John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4.

“We’re excited to take on the Overmountain Rally this weekend,” said [Luis Perocarpi](#), team owner, LAP Motorsports. “Throughout the ARA season, both the John Cooper Works 2 Door and John Cooper Works Countryman ALL4 have proven their

performance, durability, and competitiveness, earning multiple class podiums along the way. We've built strong momentum, and we're ready to carry that into the demanding stages of Tennessee and fight for another strong result."

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 adventurer spirit, the 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

With two events remaining, the 2026 ARA season has included a full competitive calendar of eight 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 Overmountain Rally September 18-19, the 2026 ARA National Championship season will conclude with the **Lake Superior Performance Rally** October 9-10, 2026, in 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 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.

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