



2016 Dakar / SS7: Al-Attiyah and Hirvonen fourth and fifth in the overall standings

- Al-Attiyah finishes third in the seventh stage, Hirvonen comes fifth
- Tomorrow the Rest Day in Salta, Argentina

Today's seventh stage represents the end of the first week of the 2016 Dakar. On the way from Uyuni, Bolivia to Salta, Argentina, the drivers had to cover more than 800 kilometres, including a 481-kilometre special stage. And Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) succeeded in splitting the leading Peugeot trio. "It was a good day without any problems but we just haven't got the pace it takes to match the Peugeots. I will try to defend my fourth position and then let's see what we will be able to achieve in the second week." Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and Michel Périn (FRA) once again delivered in consistent style and finished fifth.

For Dakar rookie Hirvonen, the first week of his Dakar debut is over and he currently holds the very fine fifth position in the overall standings. "Due to being split in two parts, today's special stage didn't feel that long. Only the street sections seemed to never end," revealed the Finn. "The navigation was very difficult at times, today, but Michel did a great job. Our cooperation is really good. The first week is over and I'm really happy with our position."

For Roma, however, it's the first Dakar he contests with his new navigator Haro, he already contested some Spanish Rally Championship rounds with – but not too many off-road rallies. "We made a good start into the first part," said the Catalan. "Not perfect but good! And the second part went really well. "However, Alex and I realised by now that we are not yet perfectly attuned to one another in off road sections. We have to learn to better communicate when it comes to the navigation. Driving really fast and teaching somebody at the same time is somewhat difficult. But in consideration of his short time in off-road rallying he does a great job. And on the

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special stages resembling WRC stages everything is perfect as we have been cooperating in these conditions for quite a while.”

Background info: Logistic challenge Bolivia

For most of the teams, the trip to and from Bolivia represented a bigger challenge than an outsider might believe. The biggest problem was the long travel time from Uyuni, Bolivia, to Salta, Argentina. The ASO specified a truck-travel time of more than 20 hours and 16 hours for cars. And to make things even worse, the service cars had to observe a speed limit of 80kph, in Bolivia. A special planning around the service trucks was arranged to be able to maintain all the MINI ALL4 racing vehicles at both places.

Three trucks already were parked in Salta before the Dakar baggage crossed the border. This also meant that a bigger number of truck drivers was available for the tour from Uyuni to Salta. At the same time, the first trucks and mechanics were sent to Salta on Friday noon and the rest hit the road tonight at 03:30hrs. Tomorrow, on the day of rest, the mechanics will subject all the MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles to an extensive check-up and will prepare them for the second week.

Result stage 7

1st C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 3h 19m 03s

2nd S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MCO) Peugeot – 3h 19m 41s

3rd N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 22m 25s

4th S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) Peugeot – 3h 22m 30s

5th M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 23m 10s

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10th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 26m 19s

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12th H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 31m 12s

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14th E. van Loon (NDL) / W. Rosegaar (NDL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 34m 36s

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20th B. Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 42m 19s

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22nd N. Lopez (ARG) / S. Lafuente (URU) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 43m 56s

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29th J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 53m 50s

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42nd O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 22m 07s

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tba A. Malysz (POL) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing

Overall standings with seven stages contested

1st S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MCO) Peugeot – 21h 46m 28s

2nd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) Peugeot – 21h 48m 50s

3rd C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 21h 51m 18s

4th N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 22h 04m 04s

5th M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 22h 19m 21s

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11th E. van Loon (NDL) / W. Rosegaar (NDL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 04m 09s

12th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 07m 31s

13th H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 15m 28s

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15th J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 37m 55s

16th B. Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 44m 44s

17th O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 47m 16s

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