



## Dubai Baja: Abu Issa finishes 3<sup>rd</sup>

- **First desert rally with the MINI ALL4 Racing for Abu Issa**

In the Dubai International Baja, Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) and Xavier Panseri (FRA) took their MINI ALL4 Racing to third place behind Nasser Al-Attiyah and Khalid Al Qassimi. The Baja was held for the first time as FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup round and represented the second event on the calendar, thus following the season kick-off, the Baja Russia Northern Forest. Altogether, the Baja featured three special stages held in the deserts of Dubai.

It was the first pure desert rally contested by Abu Issa at the wheel of a MINI ALL4 Racing. After all, he switched from riding a squad into the cockpit of a car only last year.

By finishing third twice and fourth once, the driver from Qatar and his co-driver Panseri were among the front runners throughout the event. "This is my first podium in the car category and I'm really delighted with having secured this result," said Abu Issa. "The Baja was a good lesson for someone like me who hasn't got a lot of experience when it comes to racing in the dunes with a car. It's a really difficult task as you have to be fully focused all the time. There weren't any straights allowing you to take a breather."

The next round on the FIA World Cup calendar, the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, will be held from 01st to 07th April.

### Overall ranking after SS3:

1. N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (MCO) - Toyota - 3h 55m 46s
2. K. Al-Quassimi (UAE) / K. Al-Kendi (UAE) - Peugeot - 4h 10m 43s
3. M. Abu Issa (QAT) / X. Panseri (FRA) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 18m 53s

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