



Ricardo Porém wins Baja Portalegre

- Special service team for Porém/Palmeiro
- X-raid teambuilding in Portugal

The Portuguese Ricardo Porém and Filipe Palmeiro secured the victory with their MINI ALL4 Racing at the Baja Portalegre in Portugal, last round of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies. After 500 km against the clock they were nearly five minutes ahead of their competitors. For Porém this was the third victory in a row at this event. It was even more important for Palmeiro since he is living in Portalegre and this was his first victory on home soil. The Baja Portalegre was the final challenge of the X-raid teambuilding and a very special mission for all team members.

This year Porém and Palmeiro had a very special crew responsible for their MINI ALL4 Racing. Normally there are the professional X-raid mechanics who care for the car during the race. This time we had “big” changes: Within the teambuilding team manager, drivers and co-pilots swapped positions. Team manager Sven Quandt has now the responsibility for physio treatment. Michel Périn, Co-pilot of Mikko Hirvonen, used his long year experience of rally sports to be the new team manager. Hirvonen and the two other co-pilots Pete Mortensen and Paulo Fiúza took the responsibility as mechanics for Porém and Palmeiro. Navigator Tom Colsoul supported the team as logistic manager. Pilot Stephan Schott changed the seat of the race car to a nice chair in the media centre and informed the journalists about the team and the situation of the race. Thomas Quandt took care for the food of all team members.

This was the last challenge within the full week of teambuilding for the participants of the next Dakar. Last Sunday everybody met in Lisbon to take over four vintage MINI. First they all had to go to a workshop in order to prepare their cars for their further trip. After a few hours of preparation they started into the night and after some kilometres they arrived near the X-raid Sponsor Delta in Campo Maior where they built up their tents and had a short sleep. In the morning they visited the coffee roasting building of Delta and created their own blend.

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Highlight of the week was building a ponton-bridge to cross a small river. All team members had to transport the building material in their kayas up-river. They had to overcome some cascades and even on some spots they had to porter the boats. They succeeded only by working hand in hand. Building this bridge was a tough work and Hirvonen was the first to bring his MINI safely to the other side of the river. The other three followed over the shaky construction.

Next day the team members organised for the guests of Delta and MINI Portugal some taxi rides in the MINI ALL4 Racing at the famous stud farm „Coudelaria Alter Real“. At the same time some of the guests had the chance to experience the classic MINI at the horse race track. Highlight of the afternoon was a race: horse against vintage MINI. Even after 45 years the classical car showed his reliability and the horse had to cope with a second place. Within this event pilots and co-pilots got the information for their positions during the Baja Portalegre.

Ricardo Porém: „I’m absolutely speechless and happy to win third time in a row the Baja Portalegre. First I was surprised when I heard about the job swap but now I had to realize that everybody did a great job. I’m looking forward to have a big party with all of them tonight.”

Filipe Palmeiro: „This was a great rally and I’m totally happy for my first victory in my hometown. We showed up with a super team and I have to thank all of them for the great job they did. Without you we would not have had the chance to win.”

Sven Quandt: „I’m very satisfied with our whole teambuilding. We had a lot of fun. On the other hand I have to admit that the first night was very difficult since we experienced a night like on the Dakar and less sleep. Highlight of the whole event was for me and probably for all team members the building of the bridge and the crossing of the river. Here it showed that all of us are able to work together even in stressful situations.”

Mikko Hirvonen: “This was a great week and I really enjoyed everything. Especially when building the bridge and crossing the river together with the help of everybody in the team. My work as a mechanic was great fun for me. Even I found out for myself “you can improve all the time.”

X-raid is now fully focused on the preparation for the Dakar. End of November all race cars and service vehicles will depart to Le Havre. From there a special ferry will bring them to South America. The Dakar will start on the 2nd of January in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay!

Overall standings Baja Portalegre:

1. R. Porém (POR) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 38m 16s
2. X. Pons (ESP) / R. Garcia (ARG) Ford – 5h 43m 08s
3. N. Matos (POR) / F. Serra (POR) Opel – 5h 43m 49s
4. A. Martins (POR) / J. Marques (POR) Toyota – 5h 44m 32s
5. R. Varela (BRA) / G. Gugelmin (BRA) Toyota – 5h 46m 45s