



Sealine Rally: Still in striking distance to the lead

- **Three MINI ALL4 Racing pairings in the top five**
- **Difficult navigation and tracks**

With three stages of Qatar's Sealine Rally contested, all the three MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles hold top-five positions. Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and Timo Gottschalk (GER) currently are second in the overall standings, just close behind the leading Nasser Al-Attiyah from Qatar. Behind them, the Russian pairing Vladimir Vasilyev / Konstantin Zhiltsov and Ricardo Porém (POR) / Tom Colsoul (BEL) follow in third and fourth positions, while Jutta Kleinschmidt and Philipp Beier (both GER) in the buggy currently hold a really fine sixth place. In addition, to the rocky roads that caused numerous tyre damages, the navigation also proved extremely demanding.

The battle for the win now is a duel between Al-Rajhi in the MINI ALL4 Racing and local hero Al-Attiyah. Currently, the gap of the Saudi to the leader amounts to nine minutes. A damaged tyre and a navigation mistake in stage two cost him several minutes and on stage three, he and his German navigator Gottschalk got lost once again what cost them another minute. "We were doing really well throughout the day but then we took the wrong way at a diversion," Al-Rajhi said in the bivouac. "Tomorrow we will keep on pushing. After all, we held the lead at one of the checkpoints, today."

Meanwhile, the Russians Vasilyev and Zhiltsov had bad luck on stage two. On the rocky road they lost a lot of time due to three tyre punctures. Once, a tyre even caught fire and they had to extinguish it before they could change it. And they lost more time when getting stuck in special stage three. Meanwhile, Porém delivers in really fine style, in his first desert rally with the MINI ALL4 Racing. And the buggy with

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Kleinschmidt and Beier also proves to be really competitive. In stage two, for instance, the pairing finished fourth despite having lost time due to a tyre damage.

Now, the competitors will have to deal with another two stages before the third round of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup will be over this Friday. Tomorrow, the special-stage distance will add up to 355 kilometres and the fifth and last special stage on Friday will feature a distance of 348 kilometres.

Sealine Rally Qatar - result SS3:

- 1st N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) – Toyota - 3h 19m 33s
- 2nd **Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing - 3h 20m 13s**
- 3rd V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) – MINI ALL4 Racing - 3h 38m 07s
- 4th R. Porém (POR) / T. Colsoul (BEL) – MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 44m 50s
- 5th Y. Sazonov (KAZ) / D. Tsyro (RUS) - H3 – 3h 49m 33s
- 6th J. Kleinschmidt (GER) / P. Beier (GER) - Buggy - 4h 06m 16s

Sealine Rally Qatar – overall standings after SS3:

- 1st N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) – Toyota 8h 28m 37s
- 2nd **Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing 8h 37m 13s**
- 3rd V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) – MINI ALL4 Racing - 9h 22m 06s
- 4th R. Porém (POR) / T. Colsoul (BEL) – MINI ALL4 Racing 9h 42m 30s
- 5th Y. Sazonov (KAZ) / D. Tsyro (RUS) - H3 – 9h 50m 42s
- 6th J. Kleinschmidt (GER) / P. Beier (GER) - Buggy - 10h 07m 09s