



Mikko Hirvonen wins stage four

- Another good MINI ALL4 Racing team effort
- Tomorrow, the field will have to contest the final stage of the 2016 ADDC

It was the hottest day of the 2016 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge so far. Nonetheless, Finland's Mikko Hirvonen and his French co-driver Michel Périn won the stage, with Nasser Al-Attiyah in his Toyota coming second. Third place was also secured by a MINI ALL4 Racing pairing: US-American Bryce Menzies and his navigator Andreas Schulz (GER). Behind them, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) and Jakub Przygonski (POL) / Tom Colsoul (BEL) finished fourth and fifth respectively, with Sheik Khalid Al-Qassimi and Khalid Al Kendi (both UAE) following in sixth position. The Russians Vladimir Vasilyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov had an accident and are still on their way to completing the special stage.

The heat got to Hirvonen quite a lot but the Finn struggled through and set the fastest time of the day. "In the early stages I just didn't find my rhythm," Hirvonen – who now holds third position in the overall standings – admitted in bivouac. "Bryce closed the gap to us and we drove together. Sometimes he was ahead, sometimes I. But I think that he then got stuck somewhere while we could trace on without any problems. That arguably was the key for our success." And indeed, Menzies got stuck and lost a few minutes while he was driving behind the Finn.

Al-Rajhi and Gottschalk were the fourth-fastest, today." "We were somewhat too carefully in the opening stages," said co-driver Gottschalk. "There, we lost the time that cost us a better position." Due to the problems of Vasilyev, Al-Rajhi moved up to second in the overall standings. For Przygonski who finished behind Al-Rajhi the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge is the first event he contests with the Belgian co-driver Tom Colsoul. For the Belgian, this event represents a multi-time debut: "It's my first rally with Kuba, my first with a MINI ALL4 Racing and my first Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge," he reveals. "And I have to admit that I am slowly but surely fed up with

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dunes. Actually, you always want to drive in the dunes – but here it's a touch too much. The cooperation with Kuba is great. You quickly realise that he navigated on a motorbike, in the past. He asks question no other driver would ask.”

Jutta Kleinschmidt and Tina Thörner couldn't complete the special stage due to gearbox problems. “Unfortunately we lost our reverse and to prevent more damage we quit the special stage. But we covered enough kilometres for testing a new set-up. Yes, it's a pity that we had to retire but we knew from the beginning that we are here for testing.”

Tomorrow's final stage will take the field back to Abu Dhabi City. The special-stage mileage amounts to 230 kilometres.

ADDC - result SS4:

- 1. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) - MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 33m 05s**
- 2. N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) – Toyota 3h 34m 13s**
- 3. B. Menzies (USA) / A. Schulz (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 36m 48s**
- 4. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 40m 08s**
- 5. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colsoul (BEL) – MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 46m 08s**
- 6. K. SH Al-Qassimi (UAE) / K. Al Kendi (UAE) – MINI ALL4 Racing 3h 48m 37s**

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- 14. S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing 4h 35m 34s**

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- tba J. Kleinschmidt (GER) / T. Thörner (SWE) – Buggy**
tba V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) – MINI ALL4 Racing

ADDC – overall standings after SS4:

- 1. N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) – Toyota 14h 36m 32s**
- 2. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing 15h 04m 40s**
- 3. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) - MINI ALL4 Racing 15h 12m 12s**
- 4. B. Menzies (USA) / A. Schulz (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing 15h 17m 05s**
- 5. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colsoul (BEL) – MINI ALL4 Racing 15h 18m 55s**
- 6. K. SH Al-Qassimi (UAE) / K. Al Kendi (UAE) – MINI ALL4 Racing 15h 43m 32m**

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- 22. S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) – MINI ALL4 Racing 25h 33m 25s**

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- tba J. Kleinschmidt (GER) / T. Thörner (SWE) – Buggy**
tba V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) – MINI ALL4 Racing