



## Colourful top-flight: Seven MINI ALL4 Racing in the top 10

- Nani Roma defends his overall lead
- Tomorrow, the field crosses the border to Chile

In the seventh stage around Salta, following the day of rest, the MINI ALL4 Racing really went for it – and seven of them made it to the top 10! Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and Lucas Cruz (ESP) in the white MINI ALL4 Racing finished second behind buggy driver Carlos Sainz. Frenchmen Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret were just slightly slower and took their black MINI ALL4 Racing to third place. Nani Roma (ESP) and his French navigator Michel Périn, currently the overall leaders, finished fourth, with their yellow MINI ALL4 Racing.

The red MINI ALL4 Racing, raced by Poland's Krzysztof Holowczyc and his Russian co-driver Konstantin Zhiltsov, came fifth, followed by the Argentineans Federico Villagra / Jorge Perez Companc who also race a MINI ALL4 Racing. The next MINI ALL4 Racing, the one of Russian Vladimir Vasilyev and Vitaly Yevtyekhov (UKR), finished seventh, with Orlando Terranova (ARG) and Paulo Fiúza (POR) in the orange MINI ALL4 Racing crossing the finish line in ninth position.

Today's special stage that resembled a WRC special stage suited Al-Attiyah particularly well. "It was a fast special stage without any particularly highlights," explained the driver from Qatar. "I'm rather happy with the result but driving so high above sea level wasn't too pleasant." He still holds fifth position in the overall standings.

Peterhansel had to cope with a special problem, today. "Whenever we were driving really fast, there was a herd of llamas standing in our way," the Frenchman revealed. "We blew the horn but they just ignored it. So, we had to decelerate from 170 to 50 kph." Later, he had to make a stop due to a puncture as he had driven over a piece of metal. In the overall standings, he still holds second position, some 30 minutes behind his team-mate Roma.

Like many of his team-mates, Roma also had to make a stop because of a puncture. "Afterwards, we were stuck in the dust of Giniel de Villiers but he let us pass as soon as possible," said the Catalan. "Altogether, it was a positive day for us. Unfortunately, there was the delay at the start. I don't like it if you already are wearing your helmet to then be forced to wait."

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Meanwhile, Holowczyc definitely has battled his way back into the top flight. “In the past days I had to eat so much dust that I nearly didn’t know how it feels to battle it out for fast times,” said the Pole. “Yes, I was driving behind Vasilyev, today, but he also was driving fast.”

Argentinean Terranova, however, encountered a day to forget. At first he hit a rock, resulting in a puncture. “Later, we were driving on a winding road, I had to avoid a rock and we bottomed out. Getting the car back on its wheels was anything but easy and we lost a lot of time while trying to do so.”

Yesterday, Terranova received a belated 15-minute time penalty. In stage six, he passed a motorbike rider standing to the left who signalled him to stay right. Terranova tried to drive as far to the right as possible but behind a corner, a motorbike was lying in the road. Terranova just wasn’t able to avoid the bike and rolled over it at 18kph. As he knew that the bike rider was unhurt, he opted for continuing, nevertheless. The stewards, however, came to the conclusion that he had displayed unsportsmanlike behaviour and penalised him. A decision the Monster Energy X-raid Team will appeal against. Particularly as Carlos Sainz was involved in a similar incident on day one but wasn’t penalised. “It can’t be that the stewards apply double standards”, said Team Manager Sven Quandt. “Orly knew that the rider was up and well and he had followed his signals. Even the bike rider can’t understand the penalty.”

Although the rest day was extremely rainy and the MINI ALL4 Racing had to drive through deep mud when leaving the bivouac, there never was a doubt that today’s special stage could be contested. Nonetheless, the start had to be delayed by 30 minutes as the helicopters couldn’t start earlier due to low clouds.

Tomorrow, during the course of the stage from Salta to Calama, the field will cross the border to Chile. Altogether, the competitors will have to cover a mileage of 823 kilometres, featuring a 302-kilometre special stage with tight and fast tracks that will make overtaking particularly difficult.

### **Result stage 7**

1st C. Sainz (ESP) / T. Gottschalk (GER) Buggy – 4h 43m 28s

2nd N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / L. Cruz (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 47m 52s

3rd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 50m 32s

4th N. Roma (ESP) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 52m 24s

5th K. Holowczyc (POL) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 54m 19s

6th F. Villagra (ARG) / J. P. Companc (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 56m 22s

7th V. Vasilyev (RUS) / V. Yevtyekhov (UKR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 4h 59m 26s

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9th O. Terranova (ARG) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 01m 28s

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11th M. Kaczmarski (POL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 11m 08s

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17th S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 20m 48s

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19th Zhou Yong (CHN) / Hong Yu Pan (CHN) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 22m 28s

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22nd B. Garafulic (CHI) / G. Picard (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 23m 51s

### **Overall standings after stage 7**

1st N. Roma (ESP) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 27h 03m 52s

2nd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 27h 35m 23s

3rd G. de Villiers (ZAF) / D. von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 27h 52m 15s

4th O. Terranova (ARG) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 27h 58m 26s

5th N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / L. Cruz (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 28h 21m 55s

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8th K. Holowczyc (POL) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing – 29h 34m 44s

9th F. Villagra (ARG) / J. P. Companc (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 29h 56m 49s

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12th B. Garafulic (CHI) / G. Picard (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 59m 00s

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15th M. Kaczmarski (POL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 31h 10m 11s

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17th V. Vasilyev (RUS) / V. Yevtyekhov (UKR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 32h 15m 00s

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20th S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 34h 02m 01s

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46th Zhou Yong (CHN) / Hong Yu Pan (CHN) MINI ALL4 Racing – 40h 23m 30s

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