



2016 Dakar / SS12: Mikko Hirvonen wins penultimate stage

- **Nasser Al-Attiyah comes second**
- **Tomorrow, the final stage will be finished on the podium in Rosario**

Mikko Hirvonen has made it: in the 12th and penultimate stage of his first Dakar Rally, the Finn celebrated his first win – the third for the MINI ALL4 Racing. At the end of the 480 kilometres, he crossed the finish line with a nine-second lead over his teammates Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) who finished second. Nani Roma and Alex Haro (both ESP) came home fifth in the stage from San Juan to Villa Carlos Paz.

The AXION X-raid Team cheered and applauded when stage winner Hirvonen turned in into the service park. “I’m absolutely delighted but also surprised,” admitted the Finn. “I hadn’t the impression that we were that fast, today. Keeping your rhythm proved to be difficult. Whenever you thought that you could go a little faster the next tight corner proved you wrong. But apparently it was difficult for everybody. I don’t think that I will be able to pass Giniel by my own effort but everything can happen.” Giniel de Villiers’ lead over Hirvonen now adds up to 4.5 minutes.

Al-Attiyah once again could gain several minutes on Peterhansel but still holds the second place overall. “We again have been driving for many hours. Being the first to start into the stage was anything but easy as the terrain was extremely loose,” said the driver from Qatar. “We didn’t take too many risks but we wanted to gain time on Stéphane to keep our chances alive. And I’d like to congratulate Mikko on his stage win. A pity that he couldn’t pass Giniel in the overall standings.”

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Roma also had set himself the goal to pass a driver – Leeroy Poulter – in the overall standings. But on the tight track he just couldn't gain enough time. "This wasn't what I'd call a goof day," he admitted. "For 140 kilometres I had to eat the dust of Yazeed but I failed to close in on him to a distance making it possible that he had heard the Sentinel," revealed the Catalan. "But when I had passed him I finally could push – only to get back in the dust. I identified the Peugeots of Loeb and Stéphane and made one effort to pass them – but got off the road. Afterwards, we opted for playing it safe and just drove home to the finish." Tomorrow, he would have to be 10 minutes faster than the South African to gain a position in the overall rankings.

Just like his team-mate, Terranova also lost a lot of time in the dust. "Actually, it wasn't a really bad day but then we closed in on Robby Gordon. We started eight minutes behind him and when we had closed the gap he proved to be like a wall. This situation cost us too much time."

Poland's Kuba Przygonski and his co-driver Andrei Rudnitski (BLR) finished 12th. "I was rather busy in the car," said the car-category rookie who also drove in the dust of Gordon. "On the winding track you had to turn in, press the pedal to the metal, brake and go flat out again. There was so much dust that we weren't able to always close in sufficiently. But altogether I'm happy with what we achieved today."

Tomorrow, the final stage, featuring a 180-kilometre special stage, will take the field back to Rosario where the competitors will cross the finish podium in the afternoon. But these 180 kilometres once again will be quite a challenge: tight, winding, rocky, sandy... This special stage has got it all. And so, anything can happen.

Result stage 12 (for the latest version click [here](#))

1st M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 34m 17s

2nd N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 34m 26s

3rd L Poulter (ZAF) / R. Howie (ZAF) Toyota – 5h 35m 02s

4th G. DeVilliers (ZAF) / D. v. Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 5h 35m 14s

5th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 37m 26s

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7th O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 40m 17s

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12th J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 47m 02s

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15th E. van Loon (NDL) / W. Rosegaar (NDL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 56m 16s

16th B. Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 58m 27s

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23rd H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 6h 06m 42s

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33rd N. Lopez (ARG) / S. Lafuente (URU) MINI ALL4 Racing – 6h 41m 23s

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tba. A. Malysz (POL) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing –

Overall standings after 12 stages (for the latest version click [here](#))

1st S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) Peugeot – 43h 27m 42s

2nd N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 44h 08m 41s

3rd G. De Villiers (ZAF) / D. von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 44h 34m 58s

4th M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 44h 39m 24s

5th L. Poulter (ZAF) / R. Howie (ZAF) Toyota – 45h 03m 58s

6th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 45h 15m 20s

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10th H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 46h 36m 40s

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12th O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 48h 41m 34s

13th E. van Loon (NDL) / W. Rosegaar (NDL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 48h 52m 13s

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16th J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 49h 09m 14s

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22nd B. Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 52h 55m 25s

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43rd N. Lopez (ARG) / S. Lafuente (URU) MINI ALL4 Racing – 67h 40m 27s

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tba. A. Malysz (POL) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing –