



2016 Dakar / SS9: Three MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles make it to the top five

- Great performance of Erik van Loon
- Special stage stopped due to too high temperatures

The MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles continue their streak of success. None of the MINI ALL4 Racing racers succeeded in winning the special stage but the squad effort of the defending champions was remarkable: three vehicles made it to the top five and six to the top 15! Dutch pairing Erik van Loon / Wouter Rosegaar made for a major surprise by finishing second behind the Peugeot of Carlos Sainz, thus being the fastest representatives of the MINI ALL4 Racing camp. Right behind them, Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) / Michel Périn (FRA) finished third and Nasser Al-Attyiah (QAT) and Mathieu Baumel (FRA) in fifth position completed the top five.

After having arrived in the service park, Van Loon just couldn't stop beaming. He hadn't expected to finish second but his experience helped him working his way up to the front.

"We started with low tyre pressure as I know the region from last year and knew that we would have to face a tough day on soft sand," explained the Dutchman. "We already have been there and back then, our tyres were too hard. Nonetheless, we lost some time in the opening stages as there were huge rocks and I had to drive very carefully. The car quickly overheated but the others had the same problem and we were able to cope with it. I just didn't push to the max. Then, they stopped the special stage at CP2 but we hadn't minded if they had continued the special stage." In the overall standings they leaped up to eighth position.

Hirvonen also is really happy with his achievements and looks forward to the coming challenges. "That was something – just how I expected the Dakar to be. Very hard, very hot and difficult navigation. It was tough, but in a weird way – and I really

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enjoyed it,” the Finn said laughing. “At the same time, it was the first day that represented a physical challenge. We had to stop once to adjust the tyre pressure and another time to clean the radiator. But we never got stuck and Michel found all the waypoints. Everything went just great.”

Al-Attayah is accustomed to the heat but could understand the organisers and their decision to stop the special stage. “It wouldn’t have been a major problem for us but the ASO also has to bear the needs of the amateurs in mind.” He is happy with having finished fifth. “Mathieu did a great job, after all, we were the first to start into today’s stage. But we had to stop for a total of six minutes as we had to change two tyres and to clean the radiator. Nonetheless, it was a good day.” In the overall standings, the driver from Qatar succeeded in once again closing in on the second position.

Terranova, however, encountered a difficult day with several setbacks. Nonetheless, he succeeded in finishing ninth, thus also making it to the top 10. At the beginning we had a good pace and succeeded in closing the gap to Nani,” said the Argentinean, “But unfortunately, we lost our way a short time later. When we were back on course we again raced together with Nani – and we got stuck together. And then a flat tyre! A really difficult stage.”

Roma came 12th, thus failing to secure a top-10 result. “It was a tough and hot day with difficult navigation,” said the Catalan. “Alex did a good job but he still needs more experience. I don’t want to complain as it isn’t his fault. Like many others we also had cooling problems. To be honest, I’m happy that another day is over. This just isn’t my Dakar.”

Harry Hunt climbed out of his MINI ALL4 Racing sweat soaked but happy. “It was extremely hot and extremely tough,” revealed Hunt who finished 13th. “At the beginning we were racing in a riverbed with a lot of rocks and there, we opted for a conservative approach. Later, we got into deep sand and camel grass. We made good progress and hadn’t a flat tyre but our left rear tyre lost air, so we had to re-inflate it. Unfortunately, our luck didn’t last and later, we lost some time due to two damaged tyres.”

Tomorrow, in stage 10, the competitors will have to race from Belén to La Rioja. And again, the main challenge of the stage will be dunes – the Dakar’s special highlight. But tomorrow’s stage will feature an innovation: the start. The first 10 bikes, 10 cars and 5 trucks will start in the order of the times they set today. So, the categories

possibly will be stirred, tomorrow. The total distance covered tomorrow will add up to 763 kilometres, 278 of them in the special stage!

Result stage 9 (for the latest version click [here](#))

- 1st C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 2h 35m 31s
- 2nd E. van Loon (NED) / W. Rosegaar (NED) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 35m 41s
- 3rd M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 35m 48s
- 4th G. DeVilliers (ZAF) / D. v. Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 2h 36m 09s
- 5th N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 37m 35s
- ...
- 9th O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 46m 24s
- ...
- 12th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 52m 14s
- 13th H. Hunt (GB) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 53m 25s
- ...
- 23rd J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 53m 20s
- ...
- 31st N. Lopez (ARG) / S. Lafuente (URY) MINI ALL4 Racing – 5h 23m 06s
- ...
- tba Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing
- tba A. Malysz (POL) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing

Overall standings after stage 9 (for the latest version click [here](#))

- 1st C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 28h 39m 24s
- 2nd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) Peugeot – 28h 46m 27s
- 3rd N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 28h 54m 04s
- 4th M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 29h 14m 14s
- 5th G. DeVilliers (ZAF) / D. v. Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 29h 32m 42s
- ...
- 8th E. van Loon (NED) / W. Rosegaar (NED) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 07m 29s
- 9th J. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 22m 19s
- ...
- 12th H. Hunt (GB) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 53m 25s
- ...
- 14th O. Terranova (ARG) / B. Graue (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 57m 40s
- ...
- 17th J. Przygonski (POL) / A. Rudnitski (BLR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 32h 03m 26s

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23rd Garafulic (CHL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 34h 57m 32s

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46th N. Lopez (ARG) / S. Lafuente (URY) MINI ALL4 Racing – 46h 18m 29s

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48th A. Malysz (POL) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 49h 26m 42s