



Silk Way Rally – SS10: All five MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles in the top 10

- Al-Rajhi/Gottschalk still the fastest MINI ALL4 Racing pairing
- Hunt/Schulz in the way up

50 percent of the fastest cars in the overall standings of the 2016 Silk Way Rally are MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles. With 10 of the 15 stages contested, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and Timo Gottschalk (GER) hold third position, followed by Russian pairing Vladimir Vasilyev / Konstantin Zhiltsov. Meanwhile, Harry Hunt (GBR) and Andreas Schulz (GER) continued to work their way up and currently hold fifth place. Behind them, Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / Anton Nikolaev (RUS) and Bauyrzhan Issabayev / Vladimir Demyanenko (RUS) follow in sixth and eighth positions respectively.

The past two stages, Urumqi-Hami and Hami-Dunhuang, featured a lot of extremely bumpy sections that suited the buggies better than the all-wheel driven cars. Furthermore, they took the field for the first time into the dunes. There, Al-Rajhi and Gottschalk got stuck and lost some time – and it cost them additional time when they had to look for a way point. Therefore, they had to settle for finishing fourth. “Today’s special stage actually should have been a good one for us,” said Al-Rajhi who finished fifth in the 10th stage, “But our power steering stopped to work at kilometre 190. Nonetheless, we didn’t lose too much time. But it was the first time in my career that this happened to me and it was really, really tough.” Therefore, Gottschalk was allowed to drive the MINI ALL4 Racing in the liaison section.

Vasilyev and Zhiltsov, however, had no problems in stage 10. In the ninth stage they had to cope with a cracked cam belt and were forced to make a repair stop but today: “No punctures, no problems – we got through very well,” revealed navigator Zhiltsov. “But in the bumpy, fast sections we had just no chance of pushing to pressurise the teams ahead of us.”

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Hunt also got stuck for a short time, yesterday and finished fifth, in the end – but today he really got going. “We had no problems whatsoever,” said the young Briton after having secured third place. “The medium section was extremely bumpy and I still feel it in my neck. But I’m absolutely delighted with holding fifth position in the overall standings, now. After all the time we lost in the early stages of the event I never would have believed that we would be able to make it so far up.”

The Kazakhs Rakhimbayev and Issabayev made a good start in today’s special stage and finished seventh and eighth respectively. Yesterday, Rakhimbayev damaged his clutch and gearbox and was towed out of the special stage by Issabayev. Consequently, they had to settle for finishing ninth and 11th.

Today’s bivouac is located right of the wall of the movie town Dunhuang that is a replication of a Song dynasty town (969 to 1279). It was built in 1987 for the film ‘Dunhuang’ and is located 25 kilometres from the city. It features different houses and other buildings in the Song-dynasty style: towers, temples, shops, restaurants, houses and more. Today, the film town is regarded as one of the biggest in North-West China. In addition to Dunhuang, more than 20 other films and TV series were shot here.

In tomorrow’s stage from Dunhuang to Jiayuguan, the tyres once again could prove to be the key factor. The 193.91-kilometre special stage will take the field again through 5 kilometres of dunes and after through dried-out riverbeds and canyons with rocks galore. In addition, the maximum height will amount to around 2000 metres above sea level. Altogether, the competitors will have to cover a distance of 609.66 kilometres.

Result stage 10:

- 1st S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) – Peugeot - 3h 18m 49s
- 2nd S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MCO) – Peugeot – 3h 20m 04s
- 3rd **H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing - 3h 21min 52s**
- 4th C. Despres (AND) / D. Castera (AND) – Peugeot – 3h 22m 24s
- 5th **Y- Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 23m 02s**
- 6th **V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 27m 45s**
- 7th **A. Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / A. Nikolaev (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 28m 03s**
- 8th **B. Issabayev (KAZ) / V. Demyanenko (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 28min 05s**

Overall standings after stage 10:

- 1st C. Despres (FRA) / Castera (GRA) – Peugeot - 22h 25m 08s**
- 2nd S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MCO) – Peugeot – 22h 35m 05s**
- 3rd Y- Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 22h 53m 08s**
- 4th V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 10m 54s**
- 5th H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 44m 21s**
- 6th A. Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / A. Nikolaev (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 23h 53m 45s**
- ...**
- 8th B. Issabayev (KAZ) / V. Demyanenko (RUS) - MINI ALL4 Racing – 24h 32min 37s**

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