



Dakar 2017 / SS2: Mud fight in the heat

- Al-Rajhi and Hirvonen sixth and eighth in the overall rankings
- Burning heat a hard test for the competitors and the teams

In the second stage of the 2017 Dakar, from Resistencia to San Miguel de Tucuman, the two MINI John Cooper Works Rally pairings Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) and Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) / Michel Périn (FRA) once again made it to the top 10. Al-Rajhi finished sixth, two positions ahead of his Finnish team mate – and in the overall standings, they now also hold sixth and eighth positions. Poland's Kuba Przygonski and his Belgian co-driver Tom Colsoul were pipped in the battle for a top-10 position and finished 11th, with their MINI ALL4 Racing but improved by one position in the overall standings and hold 12th position, now. Orlando Terranova (ARG) / Andreas Schulz (GER) took their MINI John Cooper Works Rally to 13th place. The heat and the mud that covered the cars completely when they arrived at the bivouac made the water temperatures in the cars rise massively.

“Today's special stage wasn't so nice,” said Al-Rajhi. “It comprised a lot of speed zones and straight-on sections. We tried to keep on racing at high speed as you lose a lot of time even if you are just two kph slower than your rivals. We now hold sixth position and there still are 10 stages to go. We want to push in the true Dakar stages while it was only about top speed today.”

“A really fast special stage, revealed Hirvonen. “10 kilometres straight on, a corner, another 15 kilometres flat out. We lost some time due to the high temperatures but we still hold a promising position. After all, there still are several days to go. This wasn't a typical WRC stage, it rather resembled an extended drag strip.”

“The track was anything but easy,” explained Przygonski. “Really fast but there also was a lot of water and mud. “It was slippery and the visibility was poor. The mud made the car overheat and we occasionally had to slightly decelerate.”

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“This wasn’t a good day for me,” admitted Terranova. “We had problems with the windscreen wipers and with all the mud and the water, this cost us quite a lot of time.”

Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT, newcomer in the car category), and his navigator Xavier Panseri (FRA) finished 19th today, thus making it to the top 20. Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) came 22nd, with Sylvio de Barros and Rafael Capoani (both BRA) finishing four positions behind them. Stephan Schott (GER) and Paulo Fiúza (POR) set the 28th-fastest time.

“The MINI is fantastic and I’m coming to grips with it better and better,” De Barros beamed. “This was a difficult day with numerous terrain changes. Sometimes muddy, sometimes dry. And in the mud, controlling the car proved to be extremely difficult. Furthermore, our radiator became clogged by the mud and we had to stop to clean it.”

Tomorrow’s third stage will take the field to San Salvador de Jujuy. After two days in extreme heat, everybody is hoping for cooler conditions. In the past two days, the sticky heat made the life or the entire Dakar fraternity extremely difficult. Drinking a lot was the top priority. Last year in Jujuy, the competitors had to cope with torrential rain. Tomorrow’s special stage once again will feature WRC-like sections as well as several river crossings.

Dakar 2017 Result SS2:

1. S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MNC) Peugeot – 2h 06m 55s
2. N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) Toyota – 2h 08m 18s
3. C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 2h 09m 13s
4. G. de Villiers (KZA) / D. Von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 2h 09m 14s
5. N. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) Toyota – 2h 10m 17s
6. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 11m 56s
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7. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Péroin (FRA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 15m 19s
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11. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colsoul (BEL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 16m 50s
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13. O. Terranova (ARG) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 19m 37s

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19. M. Abu Issa (QAT) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 31m 54s

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22. B. Garafulic (CHI) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 37m 05s

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26. S. Barros (BRA) / R. Capoani (BRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 42m 24s

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28. S. Schott (GER) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 45m 45s

Dakar 2017 Overall standing after SS2:

1. S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MNC) Peugeot – 2h 33m 31s

2. N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / M. Baumel (FRA) Toyota – 2h 33m 59s

3. C. Sainz (ESP) / L. Cruz (ESP) Peugeot – 2h 35m 27s

4. G. de Villiers (KZA) / D. Von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 2h 35m 36s

5. N. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) Toyota – 2h 36m 27s

6. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 38m 43s

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8. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Péroin (FRA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 42m 20s

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12. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colson (BEL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 44m 18s

13. O. Terranova (ARG) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 46m 42s

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19. M. Abu Issa (QAT) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 00m 56s

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22. B. Garafulic (CHI) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 06m 04s

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26. S. Barros (BRA) / R. Capoani (BRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 11m 12s

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28. S. Schott (GER) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 3h 16m 44s