



2017 Dakar / SS7: Four MINI racers secure top-ten positions

- Mikko Hirvonen finishes fourth in stage seven
- Part one of the marathon stage completed

The seventh stage of the 2017 Dakar Rally, taking the field from La Paz, yesterday's venue of the rest day, to Uyuni, represented the first part of the marathon stage. Tonight, the pairings have to work on their cars without the support of their teams and mechanics to prepare them for tomorrow's stage to Salta, Argentina. Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and Michel Périn (FRA) took their MINI John Cooper Works Rally to fourth place in today's special stage. Their team-mates Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) and Orlando Terranova (ARG) / Andreas Schulz (GER) finished eighth and tenth respectively, with Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) in their MINI ALL4 securing the ninth position, right between them.

Following the torrential rain that fell on the previous days, the stage from La Paz to Uyuni was shortened. Instead of the scheduled 322 kilometres, the competitors had to cover just 161 kilometres in today's special stage.

"With 40 kilometres covered we drove too far to the left," Al-Rajhi revealed in the bivouac. "When we wanted to correct our mistake by heading back to the right we drove over a small hill and behind this hill, a big bush was waiting for us. Unfortunately we got stuck in this bush and lost about four minutes. Therefore, we were overtaken by Mikko and contested the rest of the stage together."

"Actually it was a nice track – sandy with dunes," said Terranova. "Unfortunately we lost some time due to a puncture – the tyre pressure was too low – after 50 kilometres. And the navigation also once again proved to be difficult. Now we will prepare the MINI for tomorrow but we will confine ourselves to executing the standard tasks." The Argentinean now holds seventh position in the overall

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standings, followed by Kuba Przygonski (POL) / Tom Colsoul (BEL) in the MINI ALL4 Racing. "Unfortunately we made a navigation mistake that cost us some 10 minutes," admitted Przygonski, who finished 15th today. "Altogether we seemed to be racing at a good pace but when we crossed the finish line we found out that we had been overtaken by five other cars. That didn't feel nice."

Tomorrow, the Dakar will return to Argentina. In Salta, at the end of the marathon stage, the pairings and the service crews will be reunited. But to begin with, the competitors will have to cover another 892 kilometres. At first, they drive to CP 1 and from there a liaison section takes them to kilometre 246. From there, the racing will be continued as scheduled. The reason for the changes is a river that overflowed its banks.

Dakar 2017 Result SS7:

1. S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret Peugeot – 1h 54m 08s
2. S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MNC) Peugeot – 1h 54m 56s
3. De Villiers (RSA) / D. Von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota - 1h 57m 41s
4. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 1h 59m 11s
5. N. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) Toyota – 1h 59m 40s
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8. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 03m 15s
9. B. Garafulic (CHI) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 04m 48s
10. O. Terranova (ARG) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 2h 05m 25s
- ...
15. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colsoul (BEL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 12m 15s
16. M. Abu Issa (QAT) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 14m 14s
- ...
27. S. Schott (GER) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 40m 09s
- ...
34. S. Barros (BRA) / R. Capoani (BRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 49m 25s

Dakar 2017 Overall standing after SS7:

1. S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret Peugeot – 15h 57m 06s
2. S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MNC) Peugeot – 15h 59m 03s
3. N. Roma (ESP) / A. Haro (ESP) Toyota – 16h 08m 13s
4. C. Despres (FRA) / D. Castera (FRA) Peugeot – 16h 11m 07s
5. M. Hirvonen (FIN) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 16h 44m 30s
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7. O. Terranova (ARG) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 17h 13m 12s

8. J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colsoel (BEL) MINI ALL4 Racing – 17h 15m 08s

9. B. Garafulic (CHI) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 18h 05m 26s

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12. M. Abu Issa (QAT) / X. Panseri (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 18h 59m 18s

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16. S. Barros (BRA) / R. Capoani (BRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 20h 03m 05s

17. S. Schott (GER) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 20h 13m 40s

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28+ Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 30h 14m 35s