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**Dakar Rally**  
4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> January 2015



## Successful start into the Dakar for the MINI ALL4 Racing

- **Four MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles make it to the top 10**
- **Stage win for the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team**

A total of four MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles made it to the top 10, in the first stage of the 2015 Dakar Rally. Courtesy of the Argentinians Orlando Terranova and Ronnie Graue, racing the red and black MINI ALL4 Racing, the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team secured the stage win, with the Argentinians' team-mates, Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL) and Xavier Panseri (FRA) coming fourth. Originally, the Qatar Rally Team pairing Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) crossed the finish line as stage winners but due to a two-minute time penalty for speeding they dropped back to seventh position. The two Dutchmen Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar, representing the Van-Loon-Racing-Team colours, secured ninth place.

“A strange situation,” said Terranova regarding his belated win. “To be the first to go out tomorrow will represent a major challenge.”

“Today’s special stage was anything but easy and really fast and so, making mistakes was easy,” revealed Al-Attiyah. “We just drove our race and everything went fine for us – apart from the time penalty.”

“I’m really delighted with having finished ninth as I’d rather expected a top-15 result,” admitted Van Loon. “And I achieved this result without taking too many risks. Unfortunately, we had to drive – with half the special stage contested – in the dust of Alvarez who had to cope with the same fate as he couldn’t get past Gache.” During the following kilometres, however, Van Loon succeeded in passing both Alvarez and Gache – before he had to cope with a moment of shock: “I overshot a corner. I realised that I had braked too late but there was a piece of tarmac I could use.”

Vasilyev and Zhiltsov also are happy with the 13<sup>th</sup> place they secured on day one. “We didn’t take any risks, said co-driver Zhiltsov. “After all, such an event isn’t won on day one. We pushed when we had the opportunity to do so but opted for a

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conservative approach where doing so wasn't reasonable." Tomorrow, the field will have to cope with the longest special stage of the 2015 Dakar and this fact suits the Russian pairing. "Vladimir likes to cover long distances", revealed Zhiltsov, "But the problem will be the different types of tracks: WRC style in the early stages but then, things will get tougher..."

Kazakhstan's Aidyn Rakhimbayev and his Russian navigator finished 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Chinese-German pairing Zhou Yong / Andreas Schulz took their MINI ALL4 Racing to 30<sup>th</sup> place, followed by Boris Garafulic (CHI) and his Portuguese co-driver Filipe Palmeiro. German pairing Stephan Schott / Holm Schmidt came 35<sup>th</sup>.

The Buggy All Terrain raced by the Frenchmen Guerlain Chicherit and Alex Winocq made a successful Dakar debut by finishing 21<sup>st</sup>.

Following today's short special stage, day two will feature the longest special stage of the 2015 Dakar Rally – from Villa Carlos Paz to San Juan. A 26-kilometre liaison section is followed by a 518-kilometre special stage. Having completed the special stage, the teams will have to cover another 86 kilometres to the bivouac. In this stage, the drivers have to demonstrate the full range of their driving skills as the first sections of the special stage feature hard track surfaces but later, the racing will be continued on dusty tracks leading into the sand.