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Dakar Rally
4th - 17th January 2015



Stage win for the MINI ALL4 Racing

- Six MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles among the top 11
- Nasser Al-Attiyah wins stage two

The second stage of the 2015 Dakar, from Villa Carlos Paz to San Juan, also was won by a MINI ALL4 Racing. In addition, six of the MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles made it to the top 11. Courtesy of Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and his French navigator Mathieu Baumel, the Qatar Rally Team prevailed with a lead of more than eight minutes over Toyota driver Giniel de Villiers. Fourth position also was secured by a MINI ALL4 Racing pairing: Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL) and Xavier Panseri (FRA), representing the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team colours, with the Russians Vladimir Vasilyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov in the VRT MINI ALL4 Racing following right behind them in fifth.

Dutch pairing Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar, racing for the Van Loon Racing Team, finished seventh. Meanwhile, the Argentinean Monster Energy Rally Raid Team drivers Orlando Terranova and Bernardo 'Ronnie' Graue survived a multi-time rollover to finish 10th, nevertheless. And right behind them, another MINI ALL4 Racing came 11th: the one of Kazakh Aidyn Rakhimbayev and his Russian co-driver Anton Nikolaev. Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) came 17th while Zhou Yong (CHN) and his German navigator crossed the finish line of stage two in 20th position. Reigning champions Nani Roma (ESP) and Michel Périn (FRA) finished 34th and German pairing Stephan Schott / Holm Schmidt took their MINI ALL4 Racing to 26th position.

After a two-minute time penalty yesterday for Al-Attiyah he won stage two today. "We delivered in really fine style, yesterday and today", said the driver from Qatar who started into the stage from seventh position and battled it out for the win right from the beginning of the stage. "We had opted for pushing slightly harder, today – but

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without taking too many risks. I'm really delighted that I could gain that much ground." In the overall standings, he now holds a 7:42-minute lead over De Villiers.

Another three MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles hold three consecutive positions in the overall standings – within about 10 minutes. By finishing fourth, Holowczyc consolidated his fourth place in the overall standings. "That's okay," said the Pole who had to cope with seasickness, during the final sandy kilometres. "After all, the Dakar has just begun." Fifth place in the overall standings currently is held by the Russians Vasilyev and Zhiltsov who also finished fifth in today's stage. "The final 30 kilometres were really tough – not so much for the body but for the car," revealed Zhiltsov. "We had some temperature problems in the heat and consequently, we slightly backed off. The first part of the special stage was really great for us."

Three minutes behind the Russians, Erik van Loon – who finished seventh, today, holds sixth place in the overall standings. The Dutchman wants to manage his position without taking too many risks. "We didn't lose any time in the middle section but I was more careful in the opening and the closing stages," admitted Van Loon. "I always try to make it to the top 10. I could go faster but this also would mean taking more risks. I still am improving consistently and we currently hold seventh position in the overall standings – that's not too bad. Furthermore, only two stages have been contested, so far."

Over the course of tomorrow's stage – from San Juan to Chilecito, the teams will have to cover a total distance of 542 kilometres, including a 284-kilometre special stage. Following today's long and gruelling stage, the event schedule will allow the teams a slightly more relaxed approach. The stage won't feature any sand but mostly hard terrain.