

new dimension **X**-raid



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



## Two MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles at the very top on stage 4

- Second stage win for Nasser Al-Attiyah
- Nani Roma sets the second-fastest time

For the fourth consecutive time, a MINI ALL4 Racing proved to be the fastest vehicle of the day. In the first real dune stage of the 2015 Dakar, Qatar Rally Team driver Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and his navigator Mathieu Baumel (FRA) celebrated their second stage win, followed by Nani Roma (ESP) and Michel Périn (FRA) who gave the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team second place. With this result, the pairing battled its way back up to the topflight. The Dutchmen Erik van Loon and Wouter Rosegaar (Van-Loon-Racing Team) crossed the finish line in 10th.

Just as on day two, the Qatar Rally Team again proved to be the stage winner on day four. The dunes – a terrain that suits Al-Attiyah particularly well – proved to be crucial. “The first section of today’s special stage was really fast and all the cars were racing at the virtually same speed. But then, the route got rocky and we backed off to not risk a puncture,” revealed Al-Attiyah. “Our plan worked and afterwards, in the dunes, we really went for it and won the stage, in the end.”

Following his bad luck in the first stage and his battle up from the back end of the field afterwards, Roma made it back to the topflight, today, by finishing second. “Although things didn’t run that well for us, at the beginning,” admitted the Catalan. “But in the closing stages I was able to take the MINI to its very limit and set a fast overall time.”

12th to 15th positions all were secured by MINI ALL4 Racing crews: the fastest of the quartet was Krzysztof Holowczyc with his French co-driver Xavier Panseri,

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representing the Monster Energy Rally Raid Team, followed by the Astana Dakar Team pairing Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ) and Anton Nikolaev (RUS).

For Holowczyc, it was the first dune stage he contested with his new navigator Panseri. The Frenchman is a successful WRC co-driver but is making his first Dakar appearance. "He is a very good co-driver and his announcements are perfect," praised Holowczyc, "But in the dunes, he just lacks the experience." Rakhimbayev once again couldn't stop grinning, following today's stage. "This stage was big fun," he said. "And I particularly loved the dunes."

14th place was clinched by Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) for Team X-raid, followed by the Russians Vladimir Vasilyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov in the VRT-MINI ALL4 Racing. "For us, the stage rather was mediocre. The first part was rather slippery and therefore, we opted for a somewhat careful approach. We possibly may have been to slow, here and there, but at the end of the day, we are happy with the result," said co-driver Zhiltsov. "After all, we also were hampered by two punctures – on the way to a dune field and the other with just 30 kilometres to go to the finish. The dunes themselves were rather challenging as it was past 16:00hrs and the sand is rather slippery, in the late afternoon."

In the overall standings, four MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles are holding top-10 positions. Al-Attiyah still is the Dakar leader, with his lead over Toyota's Giniel de Villiers amounting to more than eight minutes. Holowczyc and Van Loon follow in fifth and sixth positions respectively. Rakhimbayev made it to the top 10 and now holds ninth position in the overall standings while Vasilyev is 11th, with his gap to 10th adding up to just 1:46 minutes. Garafulic is 13th.

Tomorrow, in the stage from Copiapo to Antofagasta, the crews will have to cover nearly 700 kilometres. The day will begin with a 174-kilometre liaison section, followed by a 458-kilometre special stage. The terrain mainly will feature hard terrain but the competitors also will have to cross several Fech-Fech fields. Afterwards, there will be another 65 kilometres to go to the finish line.