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



## MINI ALL4 Racing: Trouble-free marathon stage

- **Orlando Terranova finishes second**
- **Qatar Rally Team defends its lead**

Although the MINI ALL4 Racing failed to win stage eight, following seven consecutive stage wins, the desert racer once again succeeded in demonstrating its extraordinary competitiveness: six MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles made it to the top 10. And in the overall standings, things also look promising, with eight of the MINI ALL4 Racing cars holding top-20 positions. In addition, the Qatar Rally Team with its crew Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) defended its lead and even extended it by a few seconds by finishing third.

The Monster Energy Rally Raid Team had another extremely successful day. Argentinean pairing Orlando Terranova / Bernardo 'Ronnie' Graue set the second fastest time, today, and crossed the finish line just a minute after the leaders. Meanwhile, Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL) and Xavier Panseri (FRA) came fifth, right ahead of their team-mates Nani Roma (ESP) and Michel Périn (FRA).

Al-Attiyah suffered particularly in the height. "Yesterday I felt really sick," he admitted. "Therefore, we opted for backing off a little bit to follow Giniel. In the evening, we just checked the car. I didn't eat a lot – just tea, soup and oxygen." In today's stage however, he displayed a good pace but with just 20 more kilometres to go, he lost the entire left front wheel. "We mounted a new wheel but as you can see one of the wheel nuts is missing. Nonetheless, we made it to the finish and that's what counts."

Terranova's problems with the height weren't that serious. "I felt the height but it was okay," he revealed. "The marathon stage was a fantastic experience. Two days alone, without service, the height – and to sleep with the other drivers in one room." With his strong performances, the Argentinean has battled his way back up to 22nd

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position. Meanwhile, Holowczyc currently holds fourth position and still may hope for making it to the podium. He now gets the full support of his team-mate Roma. "Today I stayed behind him to be able to help him in the case of any problem," Roma said. "After all, we definitely want one driver of our Monster Energy Rally Raid Team to make it to the podium."

The two Russians Vladimir Vasilyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov crossed the finish line of part two of the marathon stage in eighth position. "This was the first time I experienced a perfectly organised marathon day," praised Zhiltsov. "A really great effort of the Bolivians. The first day was particularly tough. It began with rain, then we had snow and had to cross rivers. Today was much nicer and we also made good progress in the dunes." In the overall standings, the Russians now hold 12th position.

Right behind them, Boris Garafulic (CHI) and Filipe Palmeiro (POR) finished ninth. "We pushed today and I think that our consistency is getting better and better," said Garafulic, currently 11th in the overall standings. The Chilean was really happy when day seven was over. "Due to the rain and the mud, the special stage was truly demanding. It rained like mad and the vision was virtually zero. The rivers were full of water. The first cars were lucky as they just had to cross dry riverbeds but afterwards, the water line rose more and more."

Dutch pairing Erik van Loon / Woer Rosegaar finished 12th, today, thus defending their sixth position in the overall standings. Kazakhstan's e Aidyn Rakhimbayev and his Russian navigator Anton Nikolaev finished 14th today and are 13th in the overall standings. China's Zhou Yong and Andreas Schulz (GER) delivered in fantastic style, in the past days and having finished 16th today, they still hold 14th place in the overall standings. "At the beginning he slightly feared that we would have communication problems in the car. But it works just fine," revealed navigator Schulz. "Up to now, he actually delivered a virtually flawless performance." German pairing Stephan Schott / Holm Schmidt finished 31st, today.

Tomorrow, the drivers can use the day of rest for recovering from the stress of the marathon stage. This doesn't apply, however, to the mechanics who will take all the cars nearly fully apart to prepare them for the final stages.