

Media Information  
2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge  
04 April 2017

## 2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge – Round 3, FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.

- Severe heat and dunes play havoc with competitors of the 2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge.
- Two MINI crews sit inside top five overall after Special Stage 2.
- Mohamed Abu Issa with co-driver Xavier Panseri in fourth place.
- Vladimir Valisyev and Konstantin Zhiltsov are fifth. Stephan Schott and Andreas Schulz in sixth.

**Munich.** All competitors of the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge are facing severe challenges thrown up by long distance rally racing in desert conditions. Intense heat and fresh dunes of the United Arab Emirates are proving to be difficult conditions for many. Worst affected are the quad and motorcycle riders, with many suffering from the effects of dehydration and getting stuck.

Despite the extreme desert conditions, all three MINI crews are challenging for top honours. Highest placed MINI crew after Stage 2 is that of Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) and co-driver Xavier Panseri (FRA). Currently they are in fourth position with three Special Stages remaining and charging hard.

Abu Issa: *“I made a good start in yesterday’s stage and passed the two cars that had started before me. But then I had to act as pathfinder and I made a mistake – I got stuck on a camel-grass hill and lost more than 20 minutes. Today, the dunes were difficult and had sharp edges. In the second part we really went for it to finish third. The MINI is running really well and we are looking forward to the coming three days.”*

Russian duo Vladimir Vasilyev and co-driver Konstantin Zhiltsov started the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge with a thrilling third in the opening Super Special Stage on Saturday. They maintained this position overall at the end of the challenging Stage 1 on Sunday. Unfortunately, Monday’s Stage 2 saw them become another victim of the dunes and lost significant time to finish fifth overall with three stages left to recover.

The third MINI crew of German pairing Stephan Schott and Andreas Schulz are also in good form despite the conditions. Completing inside the top ten on both race days, going into Stage 3 they are sixth overall to make up the trio of MINI crews midway of the top ten competitors.



**Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge: MINI ALL4 Racing overall positions after Stage 2**

<b>Driver</b>	<b>Co-driver</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Position</b>
Mohammed Abu Issa (QAT)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	209	X-raid Team	4th
Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	203	G-Energy Team	5th
Stephan Schott (GER)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	210	X-raid Team	6th

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