



Media Information  
2017 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge  
06 April 2017

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

- **MINI success at Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge with third place result.**
- **Mohamed Abu Issa with co-driver Xavier Panseri snatch third place in dramatic final race stage.**
- **Two crews of the MINI Family complete a “challenging” race.**

**Munich.** The 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge finished today after a final 234 km (Stage 5) of tough desert action. Once again the desert terrain threw up unexpected challenges – a theme that has run the length of this annual event.

MINI crew Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) and co-driver Xavier Panseri (FRA) finished the race in third place overall. This success in only their third race together – and the first full season in a car for Abbu Issa – once again showed the competitiveness spirit of this relatively new partnership is growing.

Talking from the X-raid bivouac directly after the race, Mohamed Abu Issa said: *“The five days of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge is, like it says, a challenge. It’s 90% sand, so any mistake or loss of concentration and straight away you are stuck for 20 minutes minimum. I learned a lot from this race. It’s my first year and I learned about being fast, consistent and to finish every day. I had no problems with my MINI; the MINI is known for being one of the most reliable cars.”*

German pairing Stephan Schott and Andreas Schulz (#210) completed the race in 17<sup>th</sup> place. This was indeed a remarkable result considering they and their MINI race car ended upside in the dunes at one point during an incident on Stage 3. This lost them a significant amount of time but experience and determination, plus the reliability of their MINI race car, kicked in hard to see them cross the finish line after a gruelling five days.

Russian duo Vladimir Vasilyev and co-driver Konstantin Zhiltsov started the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge in a determined mood with thoughts on capturing their third Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge title. Unfortunately, a back injury obtained during Stage 3 led to Vasilyev’s race retirement and big disappointment.

Round four of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup is the Sealine Cross Country Rally, 16-21<sup>st</sup> April.



**Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge: MINI ALL4 Racing race end positions.**

<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	3rd
Stephan Schott (GER)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	210	X-raid Team	17th

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