



## 2017 SWR: Team X-raid pairings finish second and third

- Al-Rajhi and Menzies secure second and third positions in SS10
- Menzies still third in the overall standing

The 10<sup>th</sup> stage of the Silk Way Rally, from Hami to Dunhuang, made for high spirits at the X-raid team. Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) finished the special stage with their MINI John Cooper Works Rally in second position, with their US-American team-mates, Bryce Menzies und Pete Mortensen following right behind in third. With this result, Menzies and Mortensen did not only defend their third place in the overall standing but also closed in on their second-placed rivals. Meanwhile, Al-Rajhi and Colsoul kept on working their way up and hold the 11<sup>th</sup> place in the overall standings.

The ninth stage however didn't run well for Menzies and Mortensen. "At the beginning, in the dunes, we were really fast," says Menzies. "We could close in on Despres but then, we unfortunately had a slow puncture. Afterwards we lost our way what cost us a lot of time. And in the end we were stopped once again by a second puncture." Due to all these incidents, the X-raid pairing had to settle for finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in the stage and consequently, they had to start into stage 10 behind several trucks. "The opening stages were technical but then we lost a lot of time behind two trucks," reveals Menzies. "When we finally succeeded in passing them there was no traffic and we could make up for the lost time. With 90 more kilometres to go, however we closed in on another truck and due to the dust it proved to be impossible to pass it." Nonetheless, the US-American pairing finished third, thus securing a good initial position for tomorrow.

Al-Rajhi also encountered a difficult ninth stage as his vehicle temporarily overheated, due to the high temperatures and so, he and Colsoul finished ninth. But the bad day was followed by a very good one. "Things went really well today," the

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Saudi beamed in the evening. He delivered despite a problem with the power-steering system – that didn't represent a major handicap – and “Around special-stage half-time we closed in on an opponent and got stuck in his dust.” None the less, Al-Rajhi and Colsoul finished second, just 46 seconds behind the stage winners.

On the forthcoming two days, the Silk Way Rally will take the field at first from Dunhuang to Jiayuguan and then to Alxa Youqi. Tomorrow, the stage will begin with dunes that later will be followed by technical sections before it's back to the sand. And on the day after tomorrow, the field once again will have to cope with the dunes of the Gobi Desert.

**Silk Way Rally – Overall result after Stage 10:**

1. C. Despres (FRA) / D. Castera (FRA) Peugeot – 29h 58m 01s
2. W. Han (CHN) / L. Min (CHN) SMG Buggy – 30h 45m 39s
3. **B. Menzies (USA) / P. Mortensen (USA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 30h 49m 22s**
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11. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Colsoul (BEL) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 34h 22m 24s