



## 2017 SWR: Both MINI John Cooper Works Rally vehicles in the top 10

- Menzies fourth in the overall standings, Al-Rajhi tenth
- Two days to go to the finish in Xi'an

For the X-raid Team, the 2017 rally represents a rollercoaster of emotions. Yesterday, Bryce Menzies and Pete Mortensen (both USA) succeeded in working their way up to second position in the overall standings but today, they lost a lot of time in the dunes and dropped back to fourth. Nonetheless, they aren't ready to give up. "We still are close behind," says Menzies. "Tomorrow there will be more dunes and don't forget the special stage on Saturday." Meanwhile, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) worked their way up to 10th place in the overall standings, yesterday.

12 of the 14 stages from Moscow, Russia, to Xi'an, China, have been contested and despite his long cross-country rallying break, Menzies still is a factor in the battle for the positions on the podium. Yesterday he even worked his way up to second overall by finishing fourth in the stage but today's special stage was one of the most difficult ones of the event and Menzies had to cope with it as a day of learning. "We lost our way in the enormously high dunes and needed ages for finding a waypoint," he revealed. "Afterwards we got stuck on the summit of a dune. Later on we went over another dune and found the other cars but at that point in time we already had lost too much time." So, he finished 9th in the stage. Later it was found out that he missed a way point. He consequently received a 20-minute time penalty but holds fourth position in the overall standings, nevertheless.

Al-Rajhi and Colsoul finished third, yesterday, just two minutes behind the stage winners. "Things went really well for us but unfortunately, we had a tyre damage in the closing stages," Al-Rajhi said. Today, the pairing worked for the team and waited in the opening stages for Menzies. Later, the Saudi got stuck for a short time and fell

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behind. “After CP two I saw Bryce behind us and stopped to then follow him,” explained Al-Rajhi who finished sixth, today. “Later in the dunes I got stuck for a short time and afterwards, I didn’t see him again. “Many competitors got stuck, today. It was a really difficult stage.” As many other competitors also had their problems, Al-Rajhi and Colsoul suddenly held the lead in the special stage. “I just didn’t know what was going on,” admitted Colsoul. “We were following the tracks of other cars and all of the sudden it was up to us to find the path.” Now other competitors followed the track of Al-Rajhi thus having the opportunity to gain time.

Tomorrow, the field will have to contest the penultimate stage of the 2017 Silk Way Rally. The stage will take the competitors and service crews from Alxa Youqi to Zhongwei. Another stage that features high and demanding dunes.

**Overall standings after stage 12:**

1. C. Despres (FRA) / D. Castera (FRA) Peugeot – 36h 31m 47s
2. W. Han (CHN) / L. Min (CHN) SMG Buggy – 37h 15m 09s
3. C. Lavieille (FRA) / J.-P. Garcin (FRA) Baicmotor – 37h 18m 24s
- 4. B. Menzies (USA) / P. Mortensen (USA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 38h 07m 28s**
- ...
- 11. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Colsoul (BEL) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 40h 46m 30s**