



## SWR17: Menzies makes it to the top three

- **Al-Rajhi keeps on working his way up**
- **Week one mainly features fast routes**

On the past two days, a lot of things happened in the Silk Way Rally and with the sixth stage contested, MINI John Cooper Works Rally pairing Bryce Menzies / Pete Mortensen (both USA) hold third position in the overall standings behind two Peugeots. Meanwhile, their team-mates Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) in the second MINI John Cooper Works Rally who had to cope with a major dose of bad luck in the second special stage slowly work their way back up and hold a top-20 position. And there is still another week to go before the field arrives in the finish city, Xi'an.

Yesterday, in the fifth stage, Menzies secured the very fine third place, thus also climbing up to third in the overall standings. "The opening sections were really fast and it also went pretty good in regards to the navigation," said the US American. "Later, the navigation got more difficult but we were able to again gain time in the closing section." Although he couldn't confirm this performance today and finished 11th, Menzies succeeded in defending his third position. "Once again things ran really well for us in the opening section and we could pass several competitors but then we were stopped by a damaged tyre. Unfortunately we had problems with the jack and we lost time," Mortensen said later. "Afterwards we also had some navigation problems and in addition, we lost more time in the dust of several cars driving ahead of us.

Having finished second in stage four, Al-Rajhi and Colsoul were the second pairing to start into the fifth special stage. The high grass made the navigation for the first cars truly difficult and far easier for those following behind. "We virtually acted as pathfinder for them," said Al-Rajhi. The cars following behind could take advantage of the 'pathfinders' tracks. Due to this situation, Al-Rajhi and Colsoul had to settle for

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finishing ninth, in the stage. Today they could – despite some problems during a tyre change because of a puncture – work their way back up and finished sixth. “We hit a rock and damaged the wheel,” reported Colsoul. “All in all, loosening the wheel and changing it cost us about eight minutes.”

On the following two days the field will still be racing in Kazakhstan but on the end of the Saturday stage the entire Silk Way Rally armada will cross the border to China where everybody will enjoy their well-deserved rest day. Furthermore, Saturday will also bring the first sandy sections.

**Silk Way Rally – Overall result after SS6:**

1. S. Loeb (FRA) / D. Elena (MCO) Peugeot – 17h 16m 24s
2. C. Despres (FRA) / D. Castera (FRA) Peugeot – 18h 20m 05s
3. **B. Menzies (USA) / P. Mortensen (USA) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 18h 46m 36s**
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15. Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Colsoul (BEL) MINI John Cooper Works Rally – 22h 22m 44s