



Rally Kazakhstan: MINI JCW Rally gives X-raid a one-two

- Yazeed Al-Rajhi the winner, Jakub Przygonski comes second
- All the MINI vehicles secure top-six positions

The fifth round on the FIA Cross Country World Cup calendar, the Rally Kazakhstan, proved to be extremely successful for X-raid: The two MINI John Cooper Works Rally pairings, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) and Jakub 'Kuba' Przygonski (POL) / Tom Colsoul (BEL), outperformed the entire field. And Przygonski extended his lead in the FIA World Cup, with this win. Luc Alphand (FRA) / Andreas Schulz (GER) took the MINI John Cooper Works Buggy to fifth place and the Russian pairing Victor Khoroshavtsev / Dmitry Pavlov clinched the very fine sixth place in their debut with the MINI JCW Rally.

Quite obviously, Kazakhstan suited Al-Rajhi and Gottschalk perfectly – a fact that was demonstrated by their four stage wins in the seven-stage rally. They took the lead on day one and defended it throughout the event. “It was a great rally, long days and very challenging,” Al-Rajhi revealed after the rally. “We had a great fight with Kuba and the others. We are delighted with finally having been able to celebrate another win and I hope that our streak of bad luck is over now.”

Meanwhile, Przygonski and Colsoul also kept on pushing to extend their lead in the FIA World Cup – and they succeeded in doing so: the pairing secured two stage wins and finished second, right ahead of their rivals in the battle for FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup lead. Przygonski now holds the World Cup lead with 186 points on his tally, followed by Vladimir Vasilyev (143) and Martin Prokop (137). “The rally was thrilling to the very end. We had a great fight with Yazeed and Vasilyev and are really happy with having finished second,” beamed Przygonski. “The days were tough, after all we raced for more than 2000 kilometres against the clock and had to cope with difficult navigation, fast sections and demanding dunes. The MINI ran really well.”

For Alphand and Schulz it was a rally of mixed feelings. Twice they were just pipped in the battle for the stage win and had to settle for finishing second. "The buggy made a step forward since Abu Dhabi but we have to keep on working on it," stressed Alphand. "At the end of the day we contested the rally without being hampered by problems and were able to match the pace of the leaders. The rally here in Kazakhstan was amazing and the landscape just fantastic. But now we have to focus on the next rally."

The two Russians Khoroshavtsev and Pavlov also impressed with a fine performance. For the pairing, the event in Kazakhstan with the first they contested in the cockpit of the MINI John Cooper Works Rally and nonetheless, they delivered right from the start. By securing top-10 results in every single stage they made it to the remarkable sixth place in the overall ranking.

Result Rally Kazakhstan:

- 1st Y. Al-Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI JCW Rally – 17h 59m 18s**
- 2nd J. Przygonski (POL) / T. Colson (BEL) MINI JCW Rally – 18h 03m 25s**
- 3rd V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing – 18h 06m 43s**
- 4th M. Prokop (POL) / J. Tomanek (CZE) Ford – 18h 31m 15s**
- 5th L. Alphand (FRA) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI JCW Buggy – 19h 20m 11s**
- 6th V. Khoroshavtsev (RUS) / D. Pavlov (RUS) MINI JCW Rally – 20h 14m 29s**