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/ Artugna Race 2026: Tomasini surprises in the opening round of the 2026 Italian Cross Country Championship



ARTUGNA RACE 2026: TOMASINI SURPRISES IN THE OPENING ROUND OF THE 2026 ITALIAN CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP

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The Italian off-road championship got underway with a brutally demanding challenge on the gravel tracks of the Pordenone foothills, testing all its protagonists. First it seemed to favour Castagnera (Can-Am), then Manocchi (Yamaha), before ultimately rewarding the tenacity of local driver Andrea Tomasini (Polaris). In the Rally Trophy, De Luna (Skoda) took victory, while Secondin (Opel Corsa) prevailed in the Historic Open category.

Tough, demanding, battered by rain, complicated by mud, and full of surprises – even after the finish. That was the Artugna Race, the 16th Italian Spring Baja, which opened the 2026 Italian Cross Country Championship (CI2C) under heavy rain showers mixed with brief sunshine. The renewed championship reflects ACI [Sport](#)'s strong commitment to revitalising off-road racing in Italy. [🔗 Sports](#)



A record 62 entries resulted in 61 crews starting the race after scrutineering, with rally cars leading the field in their respective trophies, followed by cross-country vehicles. The race, held along the “river that isn’t there” – the Artugna – found plenty of water, not only in the usual shallow fords but also in rain-swollen puddles that made driving extremely difficult. Keeping the throttle down, tackling sharp corners and escaping the grip of the mud proved to be a real challenge.

“Still, it was true off-road,” said Mauro Cantarello (BMW X3), echoing the sentiment of many, with excitement prevailing despite the harsh conditions.

After a long build-up, the key result: a surprise victory for Andrea Tomasini and Angelo Mirolo in a Polaris Razor Pro 2.0 prepared by Lorenzo Cenzi’s team, with a total time of 1:28:08.3.



dominant win, ahead of reigning Italian champions Manuele Mengozzi and Elisa Tassile (Toyota Hilux Overdrive), second at 58.7 seconds.

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However, the third pass through the 26.94 km selective section was interrupted following an off-road incident involving Alessandro and Emiliano Tinaburri (Can-Am), fortunately without serious consequences. The remaining competitors were assigned a nominal time, confirming Castagnera-Marcon in the lead, ahead of siblings Kevin and Giada Manocchi (Yamaha XYZ 1000R), 2'33" behind, with Tomasini-Mirolo moving up to third at 4'10". Alejandro Cisella, navigated by Erika Mingozi (Can-Am), was close behind, just 6.9 seconds adrift.

And Mengozzi-Tassile? A rear axle failure just 6 km after the start forced their Hilux out of the race.

The final loop brought more drama. Castagnera, who never considered easing off, was stopped by an electrical failure in the fuel pump. Despite attempts to fix the issue, valuable time was lost and their hopes of victory disappeared.

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At the finish in Piazza Duomo in Aviano, it initially seemed that the young Manocchi siblings had secured victory. However, a technical irregularity led to their exclusion, handing the win to Tomasini-Mirolo (Polaris).

The overall podium was entirely composed of T4 side-by-side vehicles: Cisella-Mingozi (Can-Am) finished second, just 17.1 seconds behind, while Lucio Rossi and Leonardo Presotto (Yamaha) completed the podium at 1'16"9.

Three different manufacturers on the podium was another notable outcome. Fourth place went to eleven-time champion Lorenzo Codecà (Suzuki Grand Vitara), navigated by Gilberto Menetti, an impressive result for a car still lacking power. Sergio Galletti and Daniele Fontana Sacchetti (Pajero WRC) finished fifth, ahead of Alfio Bordonaro and Stefano Lovisa in another Japanese prototype.

Completing the Top 10 were Alessandro and Marco Trivini Bellini (Can-Am), Riccardo Benettolo/Martina Musiari (Taurus T3 Max), Marco Zini/Christal Vomiero (Can-Am), and the large Century buggy of Andrea Schiumarini/Nuncio Daniel Coffaro.

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