



Joaquim Rodrigues overcomes GPS problems, C.S. Santosh gains 10 places to keep Hero Motosports Dakar campaign on track

Both Hero Motosports Team Rally riders, Joaquim Rodrigues of Portugal and C.S. Santosh of India, kept up the good work from yesterday in the tricky second stage of the 2017 Dakar.

The riders started from the Resistencia bivouac at the crack of dawn with 803 km on the agenda, out of which 275 km comprised of the special timed section. It was always going to be a tough day for the men at the handlebar with temperatures touching the high 40s as the day progressed.



Rodrigues, who entered the second special in 16th place after his stupendous opening run, encountered problems when his GPS stopped working, forcing him to slow down to avoid making mistakes. Despite, being forced to cut back on pace, Rodrigues rode well enough to drop just six places as he completed the timed section in 2 hour 51 minutes and 53 seconds that put him in 22nd place in the provisional general classifications. *"This stage was more difficult than yesterday because there were a lot of unmarked water puddles in the stage. I slid out in one of these and crashed my bike. My GPS got drowned in water and stopped working. Without the GPS I was running the risk of a crash. So, I slowed down. But I managed to*

get to the end relying on my road book,” said Rodrigues after reaching the bivouac in Tucuman.

For Santosh, it was a marked improvement in performance. Starting the special stage in 47th place, he decided to play safe in the first part of the timed section because heavy rains in the days preceding the rally created large pools of water that were not marked on the roadbook. But in the latter half of his run, Santosh found his rhythm as was able to catch a few riders. He completed the 275-km special in 3 hour 7 minutes 41 seconds, which helped him to slot into 37th place in the provisional general classification—a gain of impressive 10 place over his overnight position of 47.

“It was the first real stage of the Dakar and it was really fast. In the first half, there were a lot of cautions and there were lots of water puddles that were not on the roadbook. So, I took it easy in that bit and in the latter half of the stage I started getting a good feeling and was able to catch some guys. But it was really dusty. It was a kind of stage where you could pay a big price for a small mistake and ruin your rally.”

The third stage that will be run from San Miguel De Tucuman to San Salvador Jujuy will see dramatic changes in temperature and altitude. On the 780-km stage, out which 416 km will be marked by competitive distance, the riders will climb rapidly in the Andes, reaching the maximum height of this Dakar at 5,000 metres during a crossing of a high pass, before finishing the special at 3,000 metres.

Provisional General Classification

1. Toby Price, Red Bull KTM Factory Rally, KTM, 02:37:32
2. Matthias Walkner, Red Bull KTM Factory Rally, KTM, 02:40:54
3. Paulo Goncalves, Monster Energy Honda Team, Honda, 02:41:23
- 22. Joaquim Rodrigues, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 02:51:53**
- 37. C.S. Santosh, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 03:07:41**

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