



Press Release

Qasr Al Sarab, February 27, 2023

## A PODIUM FINISH FOR HERO MOTOSPORTS ON THE FIRST STAGE OF ADDC '23

### ROSS BRANCH FINISHES STAGE 1 IN 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, had a day with mixed emotions in the first stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2023.

Ross Branch finished the stage in the third fastest time of the day, while Sebastian Buhler suffered an unfortunate mechanical issue and could not finish the stage.



Carrying forward the confidence from his strong Prologue performance, Ross Branch rode steadily with good pace to finish on the podium today. His Hero 450 Rally bike performed at its peak, and Ross thoroughly enjoyed his outing in the dunes until he reached the finish in Qasr Al Sarab.

Sebastian Buhler, who rode well from the start, suffered an unfortunate mechanical issue midway, and had no possibility to get out of the huge dunes. He had to wait several hours before assistance could reach him. As per the new rule, Rally GP riders are not allowed to restart the race, and thus unfortunately this is the end of the road for Buhler at ADDC 2023.



Today's stage, which started from Al Dhannah city, quickly sent the riders into a 400 km+ run in the desert, of which 242 kms were timed. Featuring several series of dunes and sandy terrains, the stage was often marked with dangerous to very dangerous sections. Broken dunes and steep drops were common, and the bright sunlight made the stage trickier for the competitors.

Coming up next is another long stage in the dunes around Qasr Al Sarab. The stage includes a special of 257 kms and another 108 kms in liaisons, on which no assistance from the service crew is allowed.

**Ross Branch:**

*“Stage 1 is over and done with, and I had a good day. It was a bit difficult in the morning as I wasn’t sure if I was riding fast or slow. Fortunately, I had a good pace going, the bike was performing really well, and I really enjoyed riding the dunes. Looking forward to a good start in the next stage.”*

**Sebastian Buhler:**

*“The first stage was going very well for me, and I was enjoying a lot on my bike. At around 100 kms I had a mechanical problem, and had to wait a lot of time for the assistance to arrive and take the bike out. With the new rule, I cannot start the next stage. It's sad, but this is racing and anything can happen. I look forward to the next race, and I thank the team for all their good work.”*



### Provisional Rankings – Stage 1 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	3h 00m 15s
2.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 00s
3.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 3m 12s
DNF	<b>Sebastian Buhler</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	DNF

### Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 1 (Rally GP Class):

1.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	3h 40m 15s
2.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 16s
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 5m 17s
4.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 5m 20s

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### For more information:

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