

Press Release

Qasr Al Sarab, February 28, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY STAYS IN TOP 5 AT THE ABU DHABI DESERT CHALLENGE 2023

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of **Hero MotoCorp** - the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - has continued its steady performance at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2023.

Ross Branch's confident run today placed him in No. 5 in overall positions, even as he finished stage 2 in the 7th place, just under 4 minutes behind the stage winner. Having opened the stage in the 3rd position, the Botswanan took a measured ride avoiding mistakes in the stage. He lost time early on in the stage, but eventually finished well within the top-10 spots.



Stage 2 in the Liwa desert continued to pose dangerous challenges to the competitors. The 365 km run around Qasr Al Sarab featured occasional climbs mixed with dramatic descents, and dune ranges that were difficult to navigate through. Several dangerous drop offs and the soft sand forced the riders to ride with much caution, considering today was a Marathon stage, where service from assistance crews is not allowed.



Up next is yet another loop around Qasr Al Sarab, where the combination of sand and dunes challenge riders with high fuel consumption. This third stage will include a timed special of 266 kms and about 40 kms in liaisons, in 100% desert conditions.

Ross Branch:

"In the morning I started off way too slowly, being a little nervous about the drop offs and broken dunes, and ended up losing a lot of time. But overall it went well, and I'm here in good shape. It was a marathon stage, so it's good to have brought the bike back in one piece. I'm healthy and looking forward to the next three days of racing. A big thank you to the team - the bike was running incredibly well, and I'm really happy at the moment."



Provisional Rankings – Stage 2 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	3h 24m 50s
2.	Ignacio Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 1m 17s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 1m 44s
7.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 59s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 2 (Rally GP Class):

1.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	7h 10m 30s
2.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 1m 30s
3.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 3m 27s
5.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 54s

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