



Press Release

Abu Dhabi, March 3, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY COMPLETES ABU DHABI DESERT CHALLENGE WITH A TOP-5 RESULT

ROSS BRANCH FINISHES IN THE 5TH POSITION

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, concluded their campaign at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2023 (ADDC) with a remarkable top-5 result.

Hero MotoSports rider Ross Branch followed up his impressive Dakar 2023 performance with a consistent result all through the five days of the rally, finishing well within the top-10 spots in every stage. In the fifth and final stage, he crossed the finish line in the 4th fastest time, and earned the 5th place in the overall standings of the rally.



The Botswanan made two Stage podium finishes this week, battling an extremely fierce competition with the world's top riders and factory teams. His team mate, Sebastian Buhler had to withdraw from the race after Stage 1 due to an unfortunate technical mishap.

The first 10 positions at ADDC were tightly contested by top Rally GP class riders, all of whom had an equal chance to find a place on the final podium. At the end of five stages and over 17 hours of saddle time, Ross Branch finished the race with just a six-minute time gap from the winner of ADDC '23.



The last stage of the rally put the riders through 206 kms of final battle, and another 165 kms in liaisons, moving the entire rally from Qasr Al Sarab to Abu Dhabi. The podium ceremony in the capital city of Abu Dhabi closed this edition of the challenge, which was also the second round of the World Rally-Raid Championship 2023.

Next on the calendar for Hero MotoSports is the Sonora Rally in Mexico, April 2023 – which will be the third round of the W2RC. The team will now focus on training and testing to be in the best shape for their return to the Latin American terrain after a long gap.

Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

“Like always, Abu Dhabi has been a tough and tiring race for all of us – with long stretches of 100% sand conditions, unending stretches of dunes every day, and the scorching sun right above you all the time.

“While we really wished to finish on the podium, I’m happy with how far we have come. Two years back, JRod won a third place at ADDC with a 34-minute gap from the winner. Last year, he missed the podium by 6 minutes, and today, Ross missed his podium by just 1 minute. It just goes on to say how competitive Rally GP has become, but I’m also proud that with each race, our performance has grown by leaps and bounds.

“It is a pity that Buhler – even though he was in great shape – had to exit the race due to a technical issue, and the new rule for Rally GP riders that disallows restarts. Ross did exceptionally well, showcasing a flawless performance till the very last, and we are very positive about our next races. I extend my thanks and regards to the Hero family, partners and fans across the world for their continued love and support.”

Ross Branch:

“It’s been a fantastic ride at Abu Dhabi 2023. I am super happy with the result, even though I would have loved to be on the podium. We took a lot of good steps in the right direction this week with myself and the bike, and I am really happy about that. We are up there for sure, the fight was really intense this week, and we managed to stay in the top consistently. A job well done by all the competitors – all of them pushed really hard, and it was great fun mixing up with them. I look forward to the next race in Mexico, and thank you all for your great support!”



Provisional Rankings – Stage 5 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	2h 24m 45s
2.	Ignacio Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 23s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 2m 29s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 01s

Overall Standings after Stage 5 (RallyGP Class):

1.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	17h 13m 39s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 4m 18ss
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	+ 5m 13s
4.	Ignacio Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 5m 15s
5.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6m 17s

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