



## HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY MAKES STEADY PROGRESS AT ADDC '22

### RIDERS JROD & FRANCO FINISH STAGE 1 IN TOP-10

Qasr Al Sarab, March 07, 2022

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, recorded a good result at the end of the first stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2022, with two riders finishing within the top 10 positions.



The first stage of the challenge turned out to be a rather tough one for the team. However, the Rally GP riders Joaquim Rodrigues and Franco Caimi braved the odds to make it safe to the tent, enjoying the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> positions respectively.

Today's stage which started from the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi quickly sent the riders into a 262km run in the desert, featuring long sections of just dunes and sandy terrains.

JRod rode his bike steadily taking it easy on the first stage; however, a small mistake sent him almost to a crash. Franco too, found the day tough, riding the last 100 kms of the stage battling a severe fatigue. Nevertheless, their perseverant riding places JRod at the 8<sup>th</sup> place and Franco at the 9<sup>th</sup> place in the overall Rally GP class rankings.

Ross Branch, who fought really well and contended for top 3, suffered an unfortunate crash midway, and could not finish today's stage. He hopes to recover, and restart the race in the next stage.

Coming up next is the first of two days of the marathon stage, which the riders will complete without any assistance or service by the team. The stage includes a special of 316kms and another 137kms in liaisons, making it also the longest stage of the rally.



**Joaquim Rodrigues, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"Today being the first stage, I tried to keep it easy. It was a good day for me, even though the terrain was tough. I made a slight mistake and almost crashed, but I'm happy I could bring the bike home safe. The first stage is completed, and we have a long way to go."*

**Franco Caimi, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"I'm happy to be back in the bivouac with the team having completed the first stage of the race. It was a tough one for me, having battled the last 100kms with a severe fatigue; but I'm glad we still made it to the end with a top-10 position. Tomorrow is a new day, it will be better, and we'll keep fighting till the end."*

**Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"In the morning I started really well, and was very comfortable on the bike, until just after refuel when I misjudged a dune and crashed. Unfortunately, I hit my head, so the medical team wanted to run some checks at the hospital. Luckily everything is okay, and I hope to start again tomorrow and continue the fight."*

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

1.	Sam Sunderland	Gas Gas Factory Racing	3h 18m 32s
2.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 02s
3.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	+ 2m 11s
8.	<b>Joaquim Rodrigues</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 8m 28s
9.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 10m 43s

### **Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 1 - RallyGP class:**

1.	Matthias Walkner	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	3h 41m 25s
2.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	+ 37s
3.	Sam Sunderland	Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 58s
8.	<b>Joaquim Rodrigues</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 7m 02s
9.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 9m 09s

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