



## HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY CONTINUE THEIR STEADY RUN AT ABU DHABI DESERT CHALLENGE

### CAIMI AND RODRIGUES WITHIN TOP-10 IN OVERALL RANKINGS

Qasr Al Sarab, March 09, 2022

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has completed the third stage of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge with two riders finishing the stage in top-10 positions.



Joaquim Rodrigues led the charge for the team finishing with an impressive sixth fastest time in the Rally GP class. Following him closely is Franco Caimi. Ross Branch who opened the stage today finished the stage in the 12<sup>th</sup> position in the Rally GP class.

Even though he found himself riding alone for most parts of the dangerous stage, JRod rode strong to the finish overcoming the dangers of limited visibility. His consistent track record so far in the rally currently places him at the seventh place in the overall rankings.

Franco too had a good day, and his measured ride in Stage 3 fetches him the ninth place in the overall standings.

Having won Stage 2, the mantle of opening Stage 3 fell on Ross. Being the first one on the stage and marking the first tracks into the soft dunes, Ross knew he would lose some time. However, he still rode well to the finish, avoiding navigational errors.

The 290 km long Stage 3 concluded the two days of marathon at the rally, where the riders were deprived of any assistance or service from the team. Astride their reliable Hero Rally 450s, the rider trio completed over 750kms across two days, without any issues with the bikes.

Coming up next is an equally long fourth stage, which runs in the desert for 396kms. The riders look forward to improving their performances as the race inches towards the last phase.



**Joaquim Rodrigues, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"Today turned out to be a good day for me. I was riding all by myself most of the day, and it's really tough to do that in these deserts, especially with the constrained visibility and the dangers it comes with. So I tried to ride safe and bring the bike home. My focus is to be consistent, and to continue the good pace till I reach the finish line in two days."*

**Franco Caimi, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"We're back in the bivouac with the team once again, and I would consider that as an accomplishment! I feel much better about my performance today than yesterday, and that to me is highly motivational and reassuring that I'm on the right track. Step by step, little by little we're improving, and I'm looking forward to the next stage."*

**Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:** *"I really enjoyed opening the stage today! Visibility was quite low in the morning, so I couldn't ride very fast. But opening today brought me a lot of confidence in my navigation – I didn't make many mistakes, in fact, I was pretty spot on. Overall, I had a really good day, and I'm thankful that we are back at the camp in one piece."*



**Provisional Rankings – Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)**

1.	Matthias Walkner	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	3h 24m 13s
2.	Sam Sunderland	Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 1m 01s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 2m 30s
6.	<b>Joaquim Rodrigues</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 4m 42s</b>
7.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 7m 17s</b>
12.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+17m 17s</b>

**Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 3 - RallyGP class:**

1.	Sam Sunderland	Gas Gas Factory Racing	11h 23m 47s
2.	Matthias Walkner	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	+ 4m 24s
3.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Team	+ 4m 28s
7.	<b>Joaquim Rodrigues</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 7m 42s</b>
9.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 9m 56s</b>
13.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+22h 4m 7s</b>

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