HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY SECURES OVERALL PODIUM AT ABU DHABI DESERT CHALLENGE 2026

MIKE DOCHERTY STEPS UP TO RALLY GP CLASS WITH A STELLAR PODIUM FINISH

DAVID BRACERAS IMPRESSES WITH A TOP 5 IN RALLY 2 AND OVERALL TOP 10 FINISH

Al Ain, UAE | 27th Nov 2026

Hero MotoSports Team Rally brought a triumphant close to their 35th Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge and 2026 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) season today in Al Ain. Across six demanding days of racing covering 1,931 kilometres—including 1,326 kilometres of timed special stages—the squad showcased extraordinary speed, navigation precision, and mechanical reliability across the Al Dhafra desert and the towering dunes of the the Empty Quarter.





Leading the charge from the very first kilometre, Mike Docherty delivered a masterclass on his home dunes. Entering the rally as the defending Rally 2 event winner, Docherty dominated the early proceedings by winning the Prologue, Stage 1, and leading until Stage 3 against factory Rally GP contenders, before bouncing back from a Stage 3 setback to claim his fourth stage win of the week on Stage 4. He did an amazing job in opening the stage and keeping the pressure on from start until the finish line in a demanding final Stage. Mike maintained a smart, calculated pace across the 219 km timed special to cross the finish line in 4th place in overall rankings, in turn earning him an overall Podium with 3rd place in a W2RC championship race and a repeat 1st-place overall crown in the Rally 2 category. It is a rare feat to achieve an overall podium for a Rally2 rider in a field of elite RallyGP factory riders. His consistent exploits in the Rally 2 class, evident from an envious record of holding the highest all-time Rally 2 stage wins, got him a well-deserved step-up to the RallyGP class. It will be a proud movement for him when he takes up the Start podium at the Dakar 2027 as a RallyGP rider.

Alongside him, the 23-year-old Spanish talent David Braceras capped off a highly impressive W2RC debut with the factory squad. Transitioning from the MX2 World Championship to cross-country rally-raid, Braceras quickly adapted to roadbook navigation and deep desert terrain. Highlights of his week included consistent top-five Rally 2 runs, a personal best of 6th overall in Stage 4 and a maiden W2RC stage podium on Stage 3 where he finished 3rd in Rally 2 and 7th overall. Navigating flawlessly in the final 377-kilometer journey to Al Ain today, Braceras brought his Hero 450 Rally safely across the finish arch in 8th place in Rally 2 and 12th overall in the stage; locking in a commendable 4th place in the final Rally2 rankings and 8th place overall at the end of the rally. With this impressive performance, he delivered a double delight for Hero MotoSports Team Rally by qualifying for the Dakar 2027 wherein, he will join the elites of the rally-raid - Ross Branch and Igancio Nacho – together with the newly promoted Mike Docherty to complete the Quartet who will present a strong challenge in the Dakar 2027, starting January 9th, 2027.



Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager and Head, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, said:
"Closing out the 2026 season here at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge with results like this is an incredible proud moment for the entire squad. Mike delivered an extraordinary performance all week—going head-to-head with the top Rally GP riders, taking outright stage victories, and earning a well-deserved podium finish that proves he is has earned his well-deserved promotion to the premier Rally GP class. At the same time, seeing David adapt so quickly to the bike and the demands of the rally-raid on his debut with us shows tremendous promise for the future. Huge credit to both riders and the crew for a memorable finish to the championship. We are grateful for the support of all our fans and Hero family that keeps us motivated to keep racing our limits."

Michael Docherty, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, said:
"What a rally it was for me! Finished in 3rd place overall, which is one of my best result in rally so far, so I am very happy with this performance. Of course, there are a few things to be worked upon, but overall it's been a great test. I am so happy to be in the Hero MotoSports team and thanks to them for all the hard work, they put in and to the Hero family back in India and everywhere in the world for their support. I am really excited for the Dakar, with a month or so left for it, we will work on some things and try to be the best preparations when we enter the Dakar"

David Braceras, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, said:
"I am really happy to finish my first rally. I think I did a solid race throughout and learnt so much during these 5 days. It was not about the results for me but about learning as much as I can and take all the experience. Now I will work on what I learnt to get ready for the Dakar. I want to thank everyone in my team who did an amazing job during the race and weeks before and all the Hero family who supported me."

Overall Provisional Rankings – Stage 5

01.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Team	02h 11m 36s
02.	Toscha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 00m 42s
03.	Adrian Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 03m 14s
04.	**Mike Docherty**	**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**	**+ 03m 48s**
12.	**David Braceras**	**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**	**+ 23m 59s**

Provisional Rankings – Stage 5 – Rally 2

Mike Docherty	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	1st Place
David Braceras	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	8th Place

Overall Provisional Rankings at the end of Stage 5

01.	Toscha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda HRC	13h 20m 54s
02.	Adrian Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 00m 35s
03.	**Mike Docherty**	**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**	**+ 08m 11s**
04.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Team	+ 18m 27m
08.	**David Braceras**	**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**	**+ 01h 04m 50s**

Provisional Rankings at the end of Stage 5 – Rally 2

Mike Docherty	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	1st Place
David Braceras	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	4th Place

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About Hero MotoCorp

Hero MotoCorp, headquartered in New Delhi, India, is the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters for 25 consecutive years with ~$5 billion revenue. The Company's global footprint spans 53 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and Latin America with a customer base of over 130 million. The Company operates eight manufacturing facilities - six in India and one each in Colombia and Bangladesh - along with two Research and Development centres: Hero Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) in India and Hero Tech Centre Germany (TCG). Hero MotoCorp is driving the transition to electric mobility through VIDA. Strategic alliances with Harley-Davidson and Zero Motorcycles support the design and development of premium and electric motorcycles, respectively. Further demonstrating its commitment to the EV future, the Company has made strategic investments in two- and three-wheeler EV manufacturers, Ather Energy and Euler Motors. Hero MotoCorp is the only Indian two-wheeler manufacturer listed on the prestigious Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI). Hero MotoCorp's Executive Chairman, Dr. Pawan Munjal, was named to the 2025 TIME100 Climate List of the 100 most influential leaders driving business climate action. Beyond mobility, Hero MotoCorp is a major global promoter of sports, including golf, football, field hockey, and cricket. Hero MotoSports Team Rally is India, a flag bearer in global rally racing.