



Al Dhannah City, February 27, 2024

## TEAM HERO MOTOSPORTS POWERS THROUGH THE FIRST STAGE OF ADDC '24

### A 2ND PLACE FOR AARON MARÈ IN STAGE 1

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed Stage 1 of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2024, posting strong results.

Aaron Marè, the last minute addition to the team at ADDC, finished the stage with an impressive 2nd place, whereas Ross Branch crossed the finish line with the 6th fastest time.



Today's stage which started from Al Dhannah city sent the riders on a 374 km dune trail, of which 248 kms were timed. Living up to the name of the race, Stage 1 was a real desert challenge for the competitors, and hailed by the organisers as the toughest of the week. The first leg was treacherous, with very soft sand forcing the riders to watch their fuel consumption carefully. Marked with dangerous sections and broken dunes, the first stage was indeed a major trial in the sands.



For Aaron Marè - the young South African residing and training in Dubai - the first stage brought some new learning experiences. Having finished 4th in the prologue yesterday, he started the day today in a comfortable position from behind. He caught up with the lead group, and then pretty much rode alone opening the stage until the finish line - his first time achieving this feat.

Even though Ross Branch was in the lead until almost 140 kms, a technical snag slowed him down drastically. The Botswanan chose to ride conservatively and bring his bike home safe, thereby losing almost 28 minutes in the process. He hopes to fight stronger and get back to the top through the remaining days of the race.

Coming up next is another long stage in the dunes taking the rally caravan from Al Dhannah to the legendary Mezaira'a. The 2nd Stage includes a special of 239 kms and another 88 kms in liaisons.



**Aaron Maré:**

*"Had a really good day in Stage 1. I caught up with the lead group around 50 or 60 kms, and then opened the whole stage all day. This was a first time experience for me and a really great learning opportunity! I did make a few mistakes towards the end in the soft sand, and lost a bit of time. However, it was overall a pretty good day, and I look forward to tomorrow."*

**Ross Branch:**

*"It was an amazing stage today out in the dunes - wide open desert, big dunes, and some drop-offs - it was awesome! Barring a small technical issue which slowed me down today, I had a good day out there. I'm happy that we're back at the bivouac in one piece. The mechanics will sort the bike out today, and I'm looking forward to fight again tomorrow morning."*

**Provisional Rankings – Stage 1:**

1.	Michael Docherty	SRG Motorsports	3h 29m 30s
2.	<b>Aaron Maré</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 2m 52s</b>
3.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 8m 10s
6.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 28m 20s</b>



### **Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 1:**

1.	Michael Docherty	SRG Motorsports	3h 32m 36s
2.	<b>Aaron Maré</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 2m 58s</b>
3.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 8m 18s
6.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 28m 18s</b>

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### **For more information:**

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