



Mezaiara'a, February 28, 2024

HERO MOTOSPORTS CLAIMS THE LEAD POSITION AT ADDC '24

AARON MARÈ WINS STAGE 2

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, continued their impressive performance at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2024, and emerged winners of the second stage.

Performing at his peak, Aaron Marè clocked the fastest time of the day. This stage win pushes Aaron further into the lead position of ADDC'24. Ross Branch finished Stage 2 in the 4th place, and is currently at the 4th position in the overall rankings.



Aaron, who replaced Sebastian Buhler for team Hero MotoSports at the ADDC, has showcased consistent performance in the rally so far. In the morning, a close friend of his and fellow competitor, Michael Docherty, met with an unfortunate crash. Aaron stopped to help his injured mate, and received a time compensation. Even though his mind was disturbed from the fate of his fellow rider, Aaron delivered a highly impressive and focused ride without any navigational errors.



For Ross Branch, who still remains in the contention for a top prize at the ADDC, Stage 2 was a long, yet fun day. Since he was opening the stage for most of the day, navigation was particularly tough for him. Having faced some technical issues with his engine on the previous day, the Botswanan chose to replace his engine before starting Stage 2. This came with an added time penalty; however, Ross is confident of turning the tide as much possible in the remaining days.

Stage 2 took the competitors from Al Dhannah city to their new camp – the heritage town of Mezaiara’a. The terrain was mostly sand and dunes, taking the riders near the Saudi Arabian border and the Empty Quarter, and then into the Liwa desert valley. Today’s mix of dunes, chotts, and many broken dunes, also had tough navigation to spice things up throughout the day.

Stage 3 will be 414 km long duel in the desert, taking the competitors into the infamous Rub Al Khali (or the Empty Quarter). After crossing hundreds of dunes, the riders will return to the bivouac in Mezaiara’a, a township known for its rich Emirati heritage and local culture.



Ross Branch:

"Stage 2 is over and done with. It was much fun, but I had to navigate a lot today. I was leading the race, so it was a long day for me and navigation was pretty hard. But I'm happy with my ride and happy to be back in one piece. My thoughts and prayers go out to Michael Docherty who met with an awful crash - it was quite difficult to watch my fellow competitor lying on the ground."

Aaron Maré:

"We've arrived at the new bivouac safe. Unfortunately, today morning one of my best friends Michael Docherty suffered a big crash and I stopped to help him out along the medics and the helicopter support. It was quite tough for me to continue the day as my mind was heavy and worried about him. However, I tried my best to focus on the road-book and getting back into a good rhythm, avoiding any mistakes. Thankfully the stage went well, and I'm happy with my result."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 2:

1.	Aaron Maré	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	3h 15m 53s
2.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 2m 08s
3.	Jean-Loup Lèpan	Duust Rally Team	+ 8m 47s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 20m 32s
5.	Oran O'Kelly	Vendetta Racing UAE	+ 32m 58s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 2:

1.	Aaron Maré	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	6h 51m 27s
2.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 7m 28s
3.	Jean-Loup Lèpan	Duust Rally Team	+ 21m 13s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 45m 52s
5.	Jan Brabec	Strojrent Racing	+ 1h 06m 00s

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