



Mezaira'a, February 29, 2024

TEAM HERO MOTOSPORTS MAINTAINS THEIR LEAD POSITION AT ADDC '24

ROSS BRANCH WINS STAGE 3

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed the 3rd Stage of Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge 2024, sustaining their overall lead position at the race for the second consecutive day.

Hero factory rider Ross Branch was the first to cross the finish line of the 3rd Stage, bagging his 2nd stage victory at this edition of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. His team mate Aaron Marè finished the Stage just 5 minutes behind, in the 4th place. Aaron continues to maintain his overall lead position at ADDC '24 for the second consecutive day.



The third stage of the desert race was a 414 km loop around Mezaira'a, of which 251 km formed the special. Rains and storms throughout the night left the desert wet - hardening the sand on the top layers while the layers below remained soft. This made conquering the dunes of the Empty Quarter all the more difficult for competitors in Stage 3.



Having won the previous Stage, Aaron Marè was tasked with the role of leading the pack in Stage 3. Continuing his remarkable performance so far in the race, the South African opened the Stage well, making no navigational errors. His team mate Ross Branch caught up with him around 80-85 kms into the Stage, and the duo rode together until the finish line. For the Botswanan Ross who suffered time losses due to an engine issue earlier in the race, the last two days will be crucial as he aims to finish on the podium. As the race crosses its mid-point, the team continues to hope to finish this edition of ADDC with a great result.

Next up is another 345 km long loop around Mezaira'a in the Empty Quarter, of which 231 km will be timed. With 85% terrain made up of sand and dunes, clubbed with the fiery heat of the desert, Stage 4 will form yet another long and tough special.

Ross Branch:

"Today was a really good stage. The morning had a lot of wet dunes from the rain, so I could follow the lines from Aaron and the others who opened the stage. Before 100 km we grouped together and rode all the way to the finish. Overall it was a good day, and I had a lot of fun. I'm feeling good on the bike, and am able to maintain a good rhythm. Looking forward to the last two days!"



Aaron Maré:

"When I opened Stage 3 today it was quite chilly from the rain. The stage was quite tough in some of the sections, where the sand looked hard, but was actually soft underneath – making it difficult for us to ride. Ross caught up with me around 80-85 km and then we rode together till the end. It was great to ride with him finally, and see how he navigates. I made a small mistake in between, lost some time and then again joined the guys in front. We finished another day safe, still maintaining the overall lead - I'm happy with my performance so far."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 3:

1.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	3h 36m 39s
2.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 3m 05s
3.	Jean-Loup Lepad	Duust Rally Team	+ 4m 16s
4.	Aaron Maré	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 5m 28s
5.	Jan Brabec	Strojrent Racing	+ 21m 28s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 3:

1.	Aaron Maré	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	10h 33m 34s
2.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 5m 05s
3.	Jean-Loup Lepad	Duust Rally Team	+ 20m 01s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 40m 24s
5.	Jan Brabec	Strojrent Racing	+ 1h 22m 00s

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