



Badajoz, April 05, 2024

CONSISTENT TOP RESULTS FOR TEAM HERO AS RALLY RAID PORTUGAL COMPLETES ITS LONGEST STAGE

SEBASTIAN BUHLER IN STRONG CONTENTION FOR THE TITLE

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, crossed the finish line of the Rally Raid Portugal 2024 with flying colors. Hero factory riders and Rally GP Class competitors Sebastian Buhler and Ross Branch have showcased consistent performance since Day 1, and the team continues in the overall 2nd position at the Rally.

Sebastian Buhler clocked the 2nd fastest time in Stage 3, and Ross Branch finished 4th in the Rally GP Class. In the overall Rally GP Class standings, Buhler continues to enjoy the 2nd spot, and Ross is 7th.



Stage 3 was the longest day at this edition of the Rally Raid Portugal. Starting early in the morning from a foggy Grândola, the competitors spent as many as 9 hours in the saddle to traverse 614 kms and cross the border to reach Badajoz in Spain. The 372 km timed route went through the regions of Ribatejo and Alto Alentejo – locales famous from other popular Portuguese races, and eventually arrived in the Spanish Extremadura.



Lined with narrow tracks and muddy water puddles, the long special was extremely challenging for the riders. The latter half also took them through hilly regions with steep valleys and canals on the sides of the tracks. Even while riding at break neck speeds, the riders had to also play it safe, to keep their machines and tires from breaking down across the long route. Adding more complexity, Stage 3 will also mimic a marathon stage, where the mechanics get only 3 hours to fix the machines at the end of the Stage, before they are moved into the parc fermé for the night.

For Sebastian Buhler, his familiarity with the terrain has been advantageous towards putting up a solid fight right from the beginning of the Rally. As winner of the previous stage, he was tasked with the responsibility of opening the stage, and he did a fabulous job staying in front all through the day. His powerful and consistent performance so far in the race places him in a tight contention for the title. A little over 3.5 minutes behind the current leader, Buhler is hopeful of a turn of tables in the last two Stages.

Ross Branch found the day better than the earlier Stages, and he has been able to find more confidence in riding through the narrow tracks of the region. The Botswanan Hero who is also the current leader of the World Championship, has had a tough time adapting to the terrain, but he will continue to keep the fight going to defend his lead position.



Stage 4 takes place in Spain, in the Extremadura region. The terrain will be firmer, and noticeably different from the sandy beaches of Grândola or the fast tracks of the Ribatejo. Finishing the 251 km special, the competitors will have to clock another 288 km in road sections, to return to Grândola.

Sebastian Buhler:

"It was a very hard Stage 3. I had to open the stage for the entire day – it was quite difficult with some tricky navigation and challenging terrains spread all across the really long Stage. It was tough as we had to also manage the tires from wearing out in the long section. I think I went a bit too slow to save them in the latter half. However, I was able to push towards the end, and I'm happy with my result. Tomorrow I will start second - that's a better position - and I hope to be able to push harder."

Ross Branch:

"Today was better, I'm finally finding my feet and getting more confident in the narrow tracks. Even though long, it was a fun day, with a lot of deep water crossings which had us on the edge of our seats. It's also a very different day today - the mechanics get only 3 hours to work on the bikes before they go into the parc fermé for the night. I'm also really happy for my team mate Basti, who has been putting up a great show and fighting consistently with the other teams. Thanks to the team, I'm also having a great time here, and I look forward to the rest of the race."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	3h 23m 48s
2.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 48s
3.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 6m 49s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 8m 55s
5.	Antonio Maio	Yamaha	+ 9m 23s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	6h 30m 19s
2.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 44s
3.	Skyler Howes	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 13m 43s
7.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 17m 25s

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