



Grândola, April 06, 2024

HERO MOTOSPORTS FORTIFIES THEIR OVERALL 2ND POSITION AS RALLY RAID PORTUGAL COMPLETES 4 OF 5 STAGES

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, finished the 4th and penultimate Stage of the Rally Raid Portugal, with both riders finishing well within the top-10 positions.

In the Rally GP Class competition, Sebastian Buhler, who is in strong contention for the title of the Rally, crossed the finish line of Stage 4 in the 5th position, while his team mate Ross Branch finished 40 seconds behind him, posting the 6th fastest time of the day.

In the fight for the overall title, Buhler continues to hold firm to his 2nd position, with a 4.5-minute lag from the current leader of the Rally. Ross Branch, who faced initial troubles to get into groove in an unfamiliar terrain, has improved consistently to make it to the 7th place in the overall Rally GP Class standings.



The penultimate Stage of the Rally Raid Portugal was entirely held in Spain. The day featured a 538 km course, including a 250 km special through the Spanish Extremadura region – a terrain which was firmer, and noticeably different from the mud and puddles from the previous days. The competitors started out from Badajoz early in the morning, and returned to their initial bivouac in Grândola, spending almost 288 km on the road.



Even though the fast and open farm tracks in Spain gave the riders a chance to push hard, it came with the risks of wearing out their tyres soon. By the neutralization mid-point, most riders in the top order found their rear tyres to be in severely bad conditions. In the latter half, they then had to manage the extreme risks of bursting their tyres, or toppling off from their bikes while braking. With near-zero grip left, braking and maneuvering through the tricky mountainous areas towards the end of the Stage ended up a scary ordeal.

With just one Stage left in the race, team Hero MotoSports will focus on pushing harder to finish the race with the best results. The team stays dedicated in their pursuit of returning from Portugal with the maximum points possible in the World Championship.



The last and final Stage - even though short at a little over 100 km – has the potential to decide the final fate of the top order. Having clocked over 1000 km in timed racing, the final winners will be crowned at a grand podium ceremony organized in Grândola – expected to be attended by hundreds of rally aficionados.

Sebastian Buhler:

"It was a rough and difficult Stage today. We had to manage the tyre safety as the race started in very fast pistes. At the neutralization point, my rear tyre was already in a bad condition - so in the latter half I had to manage the risks of bursting it, and ride safe and steady – almost as if I were on a leisure Sunday ride! Anyway, I'm happy to finish safe, and with a good position to start tomorrow. We'll continue the fight in the last Stage."

Ross Branch:

"Stage 4 was yet another long and tough day. But it was a good one - the riding here is beautiful, and so many spectators out on the route is a lot of fun for us riders. Unfortunately, I don't have the pace that is required to be at the top, but I'm focusing on staying on the bike and making it to the finish line, and to leave from here with as many Championship points as possible. Overall, my Hero 450 Rally is going amazing, the team is doing great, and I've really enjoyed this week. Looking forward to the last Stage tomorrow."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 4 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Antonio Maio	Yamaha Racing	2h 39m 44s
2.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 29s
3.	Skyler Howes	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 05s
4.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 20s
5.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 09s
6.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 48s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	9h 12m 23s
2.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4m 33s
3.	Antonio Maio	Yamaha Racing	+ 11m 54s
7.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 18m 53s

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