



Grândola, Portugal | 23 September 2025

## **HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY OFF TO A GOOD START AT RALLY RAID PORTUGAL 2025**

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has kicked off its campaign at the fourth round of the 2025 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) – the Ultimate BP Rally Raid Portugal.

The team is participating in this rally with three of its factory riders: Ross Branch and Nacho Cornejo competing in the premier Rally GP category, and Tobias Ebster - the team's latest recruit - in the Rally2 category.

The rally began on Tuesday with a short 5 km Prologue, where Branch crossed the finish line with the 8th fastest time. His teammates, Tobias Ebster and Nacho Cornejo completed the stage at 13th and 24th positions respectively. Tobias, the current Rally2 leader in the championship, recorded the 7th fastest time in his category.



Branch, the reigning World Champion, is determined to bounce back after a challenging season and recover crucial championship points. With a consistent performance throughout the season behind him, Nacho is expected to continue his trademark performance. Tobias, meanwhile, has settled quickly into the squad and looks forward to finishing the season on a high.



Now in its second edition, Rally Raid Portugal has already earned the reputation as one of the most versatile and technically demanding events. The only European race on the W2RC calendar, it enjoys the distinction of being the “first and only cross-border race” in the championship. This year’s race spans nearly 2,400 km over five special stages, of which over 1,400 km will be timed - marking a 40% increase in distance compared to the previous edition. Based out of Grândola, 120 km from Lisbon, the rally will challenge riders across a variety of terrains, including sand, stone, clay, mountains, fast dirt tracks, and technical winding sections, all set against the stunning Mediterranean landscapes. After spending 2 days in the Spanish Extremadura, the race will culminate in Lisbon, which will host the finish for the first time. The Portuguese capital, famously the starting point for several African editions of the Dakar Rally in the late 2000s, is now rolling out the red carpet for the W2RC, marking a historic moment for the championship.

Unlike last year, when heavy rains turned sections of the course muddy, this year’s Prologue was held under clear blue skies, providing ideal conditions for the competitors. A total of 111 vehicles were cleared to start the rally following technical checks on Monday. Of these, 50 are FIM competitors, including 10 Rally GP and 28 Rally2 riders, and the remaining registered under the FIA category.

Tomorrow's Stage 1 will take competitors south-west towards Beja on a 425 km loop before returning to the bivouac in Grândola. The route will feature fast dirt tracks and a short but challenging sand section in the final kilometres – a perfect start to what promises to be an exciting and action-packed week of rallying.



**Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"After a long summer break, we are back for the penultimate round of the championship, and it's great to be racing again. Following the South African Safari Rally, this European round across Portugal and Spain offers a completely different challenge. Compared to last year, the weather is much better – dry, clear, and perfect for long stages. We will be spending two nights in Spain before returning to Portugal, and this race is expected to be quite exciting for the passionate motorsport fans and spectators alike. All our three riders are in top shape, the team has had good training and preparation together, and the bikes have received several positive updates. We're grateful to everyone for their support, and look forward to a great week."*

**Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"The Prologue today in Portugal - like always - was a great show. It was very encouraging to see tons of spectators and fans out here. The terrain was fast, so it was an awesome day on the bike. It was not the fastest ride for me, but it was comfortable and confident, which is exactly how I wanted to start the week. I look forward to a nice week of racing here in Portugal, and to meeting more of the incredible fans along the way. A big thanks to Hero MotoSports for all the support - this season hasn't gone the way we've wanted so far, but we're determined to turn it around."*

### **Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"It wasn't my best run today at the Prologue today – I made a few mistakes around the corners – but the bike feels really good, and that's what matters most heading into the main stages. Tomorrow's start position may not be ideal, and there will probably be a lot of dust, but I am ready to fight every day, until the last kilometer. Thank you to everyone for the support - we'll give it our all this week."*

### **Tobias Ebster, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"The 5 km Prologue is behind us and I'd say it wasn't too good, but not too bad either. The important thing is I came through clean, with no crashes, and I am happy with the bike and how everything is working. It gives me confidence going into the first stage tomorrow. Hopefully I'll have a decent starting position, and I'm excited to get into the next stages to see what we can do."*

### **Provisional Rankings - Prologue (Overall)**

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	04m 47s
2.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	+ 00m 02s
3.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 00m 07s
<b>8.</b>	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 00m 13s</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 00m 18s</b>
<b>24.</b>	<b>Nacho Cornejo</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 00m 32s</b>

### **Provisional Rankings - Prologue (Rally2 Class)**

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	+ 04m 49s
2.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 00m 05s
3.	Alfredo Pellicer	Xraids Experience	+ 00m 09s
<b>7.</b>	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 00m 16s</b>

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### **For more information:**

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