



Grândola, Portugal | 24 September 2025

IMPRESSIVE RESULTS FOR TEAM HERO IN THE FIRST STAGE OF RALLY RAID PORTUGAL, 2025

ROSS BRANCH FINISHES STAGE 01 IN TOP-5

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, delivered a strong performance in the opening stage of the Ultimate BP Rally Raid Portugal, the fourth round of the 2025 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC).

Competing in the premier Rally GP class, Ross Branch put in an impressive ride to secure the 4th fastest time overall. His teammate and the newest member of the Hero squad, Tobias Ebster, also showcased great form, finishing in the Top-10 clocking the 10th fastest time of the day. Nacho Cornejo too, had a steady outing, and secured a 14th place finish. Competing in the Rally2 category, Tobias has impressed everyone again, by finishing 3rd in the class.



At the end of the first Stage of the rally, Ross and Tobias sit comfortably inside the overall Top-10 standings, at the 4th and 10th positions respectively, while their team mate Nacho stands close behind, at the 14th position. Tobias also holds the fort steady at the 3rd place in the Rally2 overall standings - mounting the pressure firm on his rivals.



Having finished 8th in yesterday's Prologue, reigning World Champion Ross Branch was tasked the mantle of opening the Stage today. The Botswanan relished the challenge, despite finding a few tricky spots and dangerous corners along the way. Coming back strong from an extensive training in Namibia over the past few weeks, Ross stays in great form and is eager to close the racing season on a high note.

Meanwhile, the current W2RC leader in the Rally2 category, Tobias Ebster is finding himself increasingly comfortable on his Hero 450 Rally. Showcasing a flawless performance today - free of crashes or major mistakes - the Austrian is consistently meeting the team's high expectations. Nacho, fondly regarded as the team's 'Mr. Dependable', had mixed feelings on the first Stage. While this terrain isn't the Chilean's strongest suit, he is steadily adapting, and remains confident of improving the pace day by day.

Stage 1 featured a 425 km loop around Grândola, including 240 km against the clock. Riders tackled high-speed dirt tracks for much of the day, with a short but testing sandy stretch in the final kilometres - a perfect opening challenge that set the tone for an exciting week of rallying. The stage was split into multiple sections before leading the competitors to a high-octane closing sprint - yesterday's Prologue route run in reverse - a spectacular 5 km spectacle for the cheering Grândola crowds.

Looking ahead, Stage 2 will take competitors from Grândola to Badajoz, covering a whopping 655 km, which includes a 429 km timed special. The route bids farewell to the Alentejo region capital, and heads into Spain, where Badajoz - the largest city in Extremadura - will host the rally caravan for two nights, before they return to Lisbon, Portugal.



Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Stage 1 was a fantastic day, and opening the stage was tough but also very exciting. The navigation wasn't very difficult, but there were plenty of tricky spots - blind risers and a few corners that caught us by surprise. Overall, it was a great day. I want to thank the entire Hero MotoSports team for their hard work over the past couple of months to get the bike to perform so well. A big shout-out to the tech teams at everyone at Hero Germany - their effort and dedication behind the scenes has been incredible. To see such a big improvement in such a short time is a true testament to this team. Looking forward to a great week of racing ahead."

Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Today wasn't my best day, but not a bad one either. I am still getting used to this terrain - which isn't exactly my strength, but I'm working on improving my pace day by day. I'm in one piece and feeling good on the bike - so we'll keep pushing to do our best in the upcoming stages."

Tobias Ebster, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Stage 1 went pretty well. At the beginning, I was a bit nervous about riding these terrains at such high speeds, but it turned out pretty okay. I had to catch up with two riders, and apart from that, it was a solid day. No crashes, no major mistakes, and I managed to finish inside the top 10. I look forward to the next Stage."

Stage 01 - Provisional Rankings:

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	02h 38m 53s
2.	Adrein Ven Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 00m 58s
3.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 01m 22s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02m 45s
10.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 07m 23s
14.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 11m 30s

Overall Provisional Rankings after Stage 01:

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	02h 43m 40s
2.	Adrein Ven Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 01m 11s
3.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 01m 32s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02m 58s
10.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 07m 41s
14.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 12m 02s

Stage 01 - Provisional Rankings (Rally2 Class):

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	02h 43m 34s
2.	Bruno Santos	BS Frutas Patricia Pilar	+ 00m 47s
3.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02m 42s

Overall Provisional Rankings after Stage 01 (Rally2 Class):

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	02h 48m 23s
2.	Bruno Santos	BS Frutas Patricia Pilar	+ 01m 07s
3.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02m 58s

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