



Press Release

Shaybah, Saudi Arabia, January 12, 2023

## **HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY POWERS INTO THE LAST QUARTER OF DAKAR 2023**

### **TWO RIDERS FINISH STAGE 11 IN TOP-10**

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed the 11<sup>th</sup> Stage of the Dakar Rally 2023 with two riders finishing in the top-10 ranks.

Sebastian Buhler led the team today with a strong 6th place, having crossed the finish line just 5 minutes behind the winner. Franco Caimi followed right behind, finishing in the 8th position, claiming his third consecutive top-10 finish. Ross Branch who opened the stage today finished 16th among Rally GP class riders.



Riding into the unknown territories of the Empty Quarter, the three Hero MotoSports riders rode with caution, and reached the bivouac safe. The first day of the marathon stage today was a 428 km ride from Shaybah, of which 274 kms formed the timed special. The stage was 100% dunes, and even though they had fun, the riders took extreme care to avoid any mistakes in the stage. As part of the tricky marathon stage, the competitors are devoid of any access to assistance trucks or mechanics at the bivouac, and any mechanical issues for their bikes will need to be serviced by the riders themselves.

Sebastian Buhler put in a great pace right from the start of the stage, staying in the top-5 at most of the check points, before finally crossing the finish line 6th. This is the fourth top-10 performance so far for the young German. However, having suffered some technical mishaps earlier in the race, Buhler finds himself at the 17th overall position in the Rally GP class standings.



Franco Caimi's consistent performance since the start of the Rally is highly commendable, and his third consecutive top-10 finish today helps him move one more position up to the 12th place in the overall Rally GP class rankings.

Ross Branch, who claimed his second Stage victory of the race yesterday, knew opening Stage 11 in the empty quarter was going to be tough. He lost some time finding his way through the sea of steep dunes, and still managed to finish the 280 km stage just 12 minutes behind the winner. However, the couple of hours lost due to technical issues in earlier stages holds Branch back at the 19th position in the Rally GP class overall standings.

Stage 12 will now take the riders back to Shaybah from the Marathon bivouac - a 375 km ride through the Empty Quarter. The second half of the marathon stage will be yet another dune fest, which the riders will have to enjoy with much caution.



**Franco Caimi:**

*"I had some good fun on the bike today in the nice dunes of the Empty Quarter. A small mistake around 40 kms where I couldn't find a waypoint cost me around 5 minutes. Anyhow, I could clear that in the end, and I'm happy to finish in the top-10 for the third consecutive stage - all thanks to the good rhythm I have achieved with my Hero 450! Looking forward to tomorrow, and the remaining 3 stages of the Rally."*

**Sebastian Buhler:**

*"It was a good stage today and I enjoyed riding through the nice desert. It was almost entirely dunes, and I found a good pace with the bike. I was able to ride quite fast, and was fighting in the top-5 throughout the stage, and I'm happy with my result. Tomorrow seems to be a similar stage as today, so I'll try to put my best efforts to make another good result."*

**Ross Branch:**

*"Opening the marathon stage in the empty quarter was going to be difficult task – I knew that for sure. But it was a fun stage, I just had to ride with much caution, since any mistake could cost me heavily today. Anyhow, I'm happy to have finished the stage in one piece; we're having a good time with all the riders together – enjoying the true Dakar spirit. Looking forward to tomorrow, to ride back and meet with the rest of the team."*

### Provisional Rankings – Stage 11 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	02h 57m 59s
2.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 1m 38s
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 1m 56s
6.	<b>Sebastian Buhler</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 5m 06s
8.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 5m 58s
16.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 12m 53s

### Provisional Overall Rankings – at the end of Stage 11 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	38h 47m 43s
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 0m 28s
3.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 2m 44s
12.	<b>Franco Caimi</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 1h 22m 57s
17.	<b>Sebastian Buhler</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 4h 07m 50s
19.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 6h 47m 48s

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#### **For more information:**

[www.heromotocorp.com](http://www.heromotocorp.com) / FB: /HeroMotoCorpIndia / Twitter: @HeroMotoCorp / IG: @HeroMotoCorp

Press Contact:

[corporate.communication@heromotocorp.com](mailto:corporate.communication@heromotocorp.com)

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