



Press Release

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HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY CONTINUES ITS STRONG STEAD AT DAKAR 2023

TWO RIDERS FINISH STAGE 12 IN THE TOP-10

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, continued its streak of strong results at the Dakar Rally 2023, with two riders finishing Stage 12 in the top-10 ranks.

Sebastian Buhler finished the second consecutive stage in the top-10 at the 8th position. Just 13 seconds behind Buhler was Ross Branch in the 10th position, and Franco Caimi finished in the 13th position in the Rally GP class standings.



Marking the end of the two-day marathon stage, the riders today traversed over 375 kms through a sea of dunes in the Empty Quarter - or Rub' Al Khali, the largest continuous sand desert in the world. With nothing else but sand visible for kilometers at stretch, the stage demanded excellent bike handling and riding skills. Many of the dunes here had steep vertical drop offs, and the bright sun made it all the more difficult for competitors to maneuver safely.

Hero MotoSports riders completed the two days of the marathon stage successfully, without any issues to their bikes. Sebastian Buhler, who claimed his 4th top-10 finish so far in the Rally today, currently holds the 17th place in the overall rankings table.



Franco Caimi suffered a big crash in the desert today, where he misjudged a jump off a steep dune, and landed on his feet. He however recouped from the fall, and finished just outside the top-10 today, and enjoys the 12th position in the overall Rally GP class standings.

Ross Branch took some time to get into full pace, yet he was able to sprint to the finish and claim his 5th top-10 performance so far in the race, and maintains his 19th overall position among Rally GP class riders.

Moving on from the Empty Quarter, the race will move northward to Al Hofuf - a 673 km route - of which 153 km will be timed, and the rest a 520 km long road section. Stage 13 will also be the last opportunity for riders to enjoy surfing through a chain of Saudi dunes this season.



Sebastian Buhler:

"The two stages of the marathon were quite similar - big dunes and fast tracks. It was not heavy on navigation, but the riding was fast, and I had good fun on the bike. The bike has been performing really well, and I did not have to work on my bike during the marathon stage, as it was perfectly alright. Two more stages to go!"

Franco Caimi:

"Good to be back after the 2 days of the marathon stage. Today was another intense day in the dunes. I had quite a big crash in the middle of stage - a big drop off a dune which I missed due to the sunlight. I jumped high and landed on my feet. I'm struggling a bit with my knee now. Barring that, we're here safe and sound, and getting ready for the next stage tomorrow."

Ross Branch:

"Today was a bit of a strange day. I took a long time to get a good pace, and then couldn't make up any time during the stage. Anyway, we're back all in one piece after the marathon. The bike was amazing, and I look forward to the last 2 stages of the Dakar. Thank you to my team, for all their support."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 12 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Ignacio Jose Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	01h 57m 27s
2.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 0m 49s
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 1m 58s
8.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 08s
10.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 21s
13.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4m 30s

Provisional Overall Rankings – at the end of Stage 12 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	40h 47m 36s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 0m 28s
3.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 2m 40s
12.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1h 25m 01s
17.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4h 08m 32s
19.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6h 48m 43s

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