



Press Release

Al Hofuf, Saudi Arabia, January 14, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY CONTINUES TO POST CONSISTENT RESULTS AT DAKAR RALLY 2023

TWO RIDERS FINISH STAGE 13 IN TOP-10

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed the penultimate stage of the Dakar Rally 2023, with two riders finishing in the top-10 ranks.

Ross Branch led the team's race today, crossing the finish line of Stage 13 in the 8th fastest time. Following Ross closely were the two other Rally GP class riders - Sebastian Buhler and Franco Caimi – who finished in the 10th and 11th positions respectively.



Having completed their journey in the infamous Empty Quarter, the competitors moved northward, closely along the Saudi Arabian border from Shaybah to Al Hofuf. The special section on Stage 13 was a rather short 153 km ride in the sand, whereas the road trip to Al Hofuf totaled over 500 kms.

This was the last opportunity for riders to surf over long chains of dunes at this edition of the Dakar, and the day did not disappoint them. The stage was almost 100% dunes, and therefore physically very intense for the riders. The morning sun made it further difficult to estimate the heights of the drop-offs, and the riders took every caution to avoid any mistakes.



The last quarter of the Rally has seen the top competitors on full attack for a place on the podium, with very limited time gaps between them. The race to the finish does come with extreme risks, and just today, two more top contenders exited from the race.

Franco Caimi had a tough day in Stage 13, owing to the leg injuries he sustained from the crash in the previous stage. However, he managed to finish in the 11th fastest time, and his consistent performance so far in the race has rewarded him a place in the overall top-10.

Sebastian Buhler and Ross Branch rode comfortably today avoiding major risks, and yet finished well in the top-10 places. After 13 stages, Buhler finds himself at the 14th position, and Ross at the 16th, in the overall Rally GP class standings.

The final stage of Dakar 2023 edition will be a short and fast 136 km special along the shores of the Arabian Gulf, plus another 280 km to ride in liaisons. This edition of the Dakar Rally will end with grand celebrations on the seafront podium at Dammam - a befitting end to the 8500+ km trip across the country, that started from the west coast 15 days ago.



Ross Branch:

"It was a really nice stage today - lots of sand dunes and drop offs. I knew the guys in the front will take big risks, as they are all fighting for the 2023 Dakar title. I didn't want to take those big risks, and hence didn't go all out today. I'm still happy with how I rode; we are in one piece, healthy, and crossed the finish line well. Tomorrow is the last day, and I'll see you at the finish line!"

Sebastian Buhler:

"I'm happy to finish another nice stage today. It was quite short but tough. We had big dunes, and the morning sun made it quite difficult to see where a dune ends. So I tried to put in a safe rhythm, and am happy with my riding today. Hoping for the best for the last day of Dakar tomorrow."

Franco Caimi:

"The special section was really challenging for me today. I am suffering from leg injuries from yesterday, and I felt much pain today at every dune jump landing. The stage hence felt very long and difficult. Anyway, I'm happy to be here, and looking forward to the last stage tomorrow."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 13 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	02h 21m 47s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 0m 57s
3.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 2m 05s
8.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4m 51s
10.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 5m 07s
11.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 7m 39s

Provisional Overall Rankings – at the end of Stage 13 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	43h 11m 51s
2.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 0m 12s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 1m 31s
10.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1h 30m 12s
14.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4h 11m 11s
16.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6h 51m 06s

For more information:

www.heromotocorp.com | FB: /HeroMotoCorpIndia | Twitter: @HeroMotoCorp | IG: @HeroMotoCorp

Press Contact:

corporate.communication@heromotocorp.com

Follow the team:

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