



Dammam, Saudi Arabia, January 15, 2022

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY CONCLUDE THEIR BEST EVER CAMPAIGN AT THE DAKAR RALLY

AN OVERALL TOP-10 FINISH AND TWO STAGE WINS FOR THE INDIAN TEAM AT DAKAR 2023

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed its Dakar 2023 campaign with a stellar result as three of its team riders crossed the final finish line today in Dammam.

The Indian manufacturer scripted history once again in this edition of the rally. With a top-10 overall finish, two stage wins, and a stage podium, this is the Team's best-ever performance at the Dakar.



Sebastian Buhler, the youngest team rider of the team finished the last special (Stage 14) of 138 km between Al Hofuf to Dammam with yet another top-10 finish, at the 6th place. His team mates Franco Caimi and Ross Branch finished just 4 minutes behind him, making it to the 13th and 14th positions in the RallyGP class.

For Ross Branch this was the first Dakar with Hero MotoSports. He suffered a crash earlier on in the race, and then, on a tough stage 4 he lost over 3 hours with an empty fuel tank owing to fuel injection issues. He knew his chances for a good overall top-result were over, but the undeterred athlete pushed hard and claimed two Stage wins in three days. With four top-5 and another three top-10 performances, Ross would have been a contender for the top prize, if not for his mishap in Stage 4. Ross finished Dakar 2023 securing a 16th overall position in the Rally GP class.

It was the first Dakar in Hero colors for Franco Caimi too, who had missed the last edition due to injury. Right from the start, the Argentine athlete showcased highly consistent performances finishing five times in the top-10. A crash towards the last days of the race caused constant pain in his leg, however, his hard work and perseverance paid off for him, as he finished with an excellent overall top-10 position, at the 10th place.



Sebastian Buhler, who returned to racing after almost a year of recovery from injury, delivered an excellent performance. In his 3rd Dakar with Hero MotoSports, the young

German claimed his first ever Stage Podium, finishing 2nd in Stage 2. Buhler also lost a few hours in Stage 4 along with Ross due to loss of fuel. However, consistently improving his performance, he finished Dakar 2023 in the 14th overall position in the Rally GP class.

For Joaquim Rodrigues – one of Hero MotoSports' first riders – this season of the Dakar started well for him and he finished twice in the top-10. However, an unfortunate crash in Stage 4 resulted in a broken femur, and led to his early exit from the race. He is currently recovering after a successful surgery.



For the Hero MotoSports which entered rally racing only seven years back, 2022 was the year of an historic achievement – their first Dakar Stage win, and a first ever for an Indian manufacturer as well. All through 2022, the team devoted hundreds of hours to training in different parts of the world, constantly upgraded their machines, participated at a variety of races, and made consistent headways into the top positions.

With the world's top manufacturer teams and top athletes battling for top positions, over 15 days across 8500 kilometers of extreme terrains. Dakar 2023 was undoubtedly the toughest so far since the race moved to Saudi Arabia. With two additional days and previously unexplored routes in the desert – the Rally proved to pose the competitors with an extreme challenge, right from Day 1.

The two weeks of racing saw several competitors - including previous Dakar champions – calling it quits owing to injury, right until the penultimate stage. Some exceptionally tough stages took the competitors through extremely dangerous stony terrains, mountain-tall dunes and steep drop-offs, terrifying canyons, torrential rain, and a lot more. Stage 7 of the race had to be cancelled for the bikes as it was deemed dangerous to continue racing in the rains.



The Hero 450 Rally crossed the final finish line comfortably today, yet again proving its superior competitiveness. After scripting their success, the team flies back from Dammam tomorrow with a renewed sense of satisfaction and pride.

The team will next be seen in action at the second race of the World Rally Raid Championship (W2RC), at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge in end February 2023.

Wolfgang "Waffi" Fischer, Team Manager:

"We're here at the finish line of Stage 14, with three of our riders safe, healthy, and going back with fantastic results. I'm happy for Franco who has been consistent throughout the race, and earned a 10th place finish, flying the Hero flag high."

"Some really nice highlights of the edition are definitely the two stage wins for Ross - a great new record for Hero MotoSports - and a very fine comeback to racing for Buhler, who bagged his first Dakar Stage podium, and showcased a good overall performance."

"We are however, lacking the overall top result we have been working all year for. We introduced some completely new technology, a throttle-by-wire system to match the new 160kmph speed limit requirement, etc. Nevertheless, apart from one really bad day in Stage 4 - where we lost not only JRod, but also our chances for a great overall position for Ross and Buhler who faced fuel supply problems - the race summary has been really positive and promising. I wish JRod a fast recovery, and speedy return to the races."

"This was an especially hard and long Dakar, with 2 additional days of racing. The prolonged challenges in the Empty Quarter proved the extreme competitiveness of our men and machines. We look forward to the next races with renewed enthusiasm, and we're hopeful for a great season ahead."

"Thanks to the Hero family and all our partners who contributed to our success story, we're much grateful for your support!"

Franco Caimi:

"I'm elated to be here at the end of Dakar 2023. Really happy for the team and for myself - we have struggled to reach this finish line. I just want to say a big thank you to everyone who has been supporting us from close or from far - we've really felt your energy over the last few weeks, and I appreciate that. Now we look forward to some celebrations, and to recover soon for the next race."

Sebastian Buhler:

"Dakar is done! This was a really tough Dakar - long stages, long liaisons, rain, dunes - for me it was one of the hardest Dakars ever. But I'm happy that it went well. I had a few problems at the start, but we overcame those challenges, and the performance has been much better since. The team also made some good progress, with Ross winning two stages. The bike has also been running perfectly. The only negative aspect this time is JRod's crash and injury. But I'm confident that he'll recover and be back soon at the races!"

Ross Branch:

"Finally finished the Dakar 2023! It has been a long one, and we had to work a lot harder this time. I had a tough time in the first week, but I'm happy to go back with 2 stage wins - so overall it turned out to be an incredible race. It was really tough and exceptionally hard on us and the bikes, but the team has been incredible! I'm really happy that we've taken some good steps in the right direction. Next stop for us is Abu Dhabi, and I'm excited for it, and for the whole year ahead. We have a lot of hard work to do this year before the next Dakar. Thank you all for the support, and for believing in us; we're looking forward to the next race."

Stage 14 Rankings (Rally GP Class)

1.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	01h 15m 17s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 0m 55s
3.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 3m 15s
6.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4m 14s
13.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 8m 04s
14.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 8m 19s

Overall Standings of the Dakar 2023 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	44h 27m 20s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 0m 43s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 5m 04s
10.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1h 38m 04s
14.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4h 15m 13s
16.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6h 59m 13s

For more information:

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

Press Contact:

corporate.communication@heromotocorp.com

Follow the team:

www.heromotosports.com / IG: @Heromotosports / FB: HeroMotoSports / Twitter: @hero_motosports

