



Press Release

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HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM ACHIEVES A PODIUM IN STAGE 2 AT DAKAR RALLY 2023

BUHLER MARKS HIS FIRST STAGE PODIUM AT DAKAR WITH A SECOND PLACE

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, continues its splendid run at the Dakar 2023 with a podium in Stage 2 of the rally.

Sebastian Buhler crossed the finish line with the 2nd fastest time, bagging the first-ever stage podium of his Dakar career. Following closely behind was Ross Branch in the 4th position. Franco Caimi finished the stage in the 14th place, and Joaquim Rodrigues in the 20th place, in the Rally GP class standings.



The German Sebastian Buhler, who missed the 2022 Dakar Rally due to injury, winning the Dakar became a dream when he was a teenager. In just his fourth attempt at the mighty Dakar, the 29-year-old has today moved several steps closer to achieving his lifelong dream. Buhler's impressive performance pushes him into the overall top-10, at the 10th place.

The second stage of the world's toughest rally was a long and dangerous one through mostly rocky sections. The rough terrain posed severe threats to both men and their machines, yet the Hero MotoSports team riders made an impressive attempt right from the start of the stage, putting up a fight for the top positions.

Ross Branch found the day to be one of the longest ones he has ever experienced at the Dakar. Still recovering from his crashes in Stage 1, the Botswanan made every effort to ride steadily, avoiding mistakes. His top-5 finish today places him at the 12th place in the overall rankings table.



The day was rough for the Argentine Franco Caimi as well. However, his consistent performance early on in the race finds him a place in the overall Rally GP class table at the 16th position.

Joaquim Rodrigues had an exceptionally difficult Stage 2, having had to run almost 250 kms with limited fuel owing to a broken tank, and a broken clutch lever as well. He lost some valuable time, however, strong willed, JRod brought his Hero 450 Rally to the finish line, and maintains a 17th place in the overall Rally GP class standings.

Next up is a 669 kilometer ride from Al-'Ula to Ha'il, which the race organization describes as "perhaps holding the most beautiful fifty kilometers in the rally". The long succession of beautiful canyons will also create one of the most trying stages for the riders, and has great potential to shake up the rider standings.



Sebastian Buhler:

"Today turned out to be a rewarding one. Yet it wasn't really a fun day, as we were riding the entire day through rocks. I was able to find a good rhythm from the beginning, and that helped me push through. Before the second refueling I made a slight mistake that made me go back 2kms to validate a waypoint, and I lost some time there. Other than that, I'm very happy with my performance and the 2nd position I've earned."

Ross Branch:

"It was a long rocky section today, probably one of the longest such stages I've ever done at the Dakar. But the day was good for me. I wasn't sure where we were lined the whole day, so the aim was to avoid any mistakes, navigation errors, and most of all, any crashes. I'm happy we're in a good position for Stage 2, which is also going to be a long one, and I'm hoping for the best."

Franco Caimi:

"It was a beautiful but really hard and long stage today. I spent over 5 hours on the bike, and it has been very demanding physically. But I felt better on the bike than yesterday, and I'm

happy that we're moving forward each day, improving in every stage. There's still a long way to go, and I'm hopeful for the best."

Joaquim Rodrigues:

"Today didn't go exactly how I thought it would. I started really strong with a good rhythm, and was in the top 3 early-on in the stage. But it was kind of an extreme enduro stage, with plenty of rocks all over the place. In one of those trails going up, a rock hit my fuel tank and broke it. I started losing fuel, and while trying to get back on the race, I found that I've broken my clutch too. I pretty much had to ride ~250 kms saving up fuel with just the rear tank left, and without a clutch lever! It was quite a tough test, but I'm fortunate to have brought my Hero to the finish. Hoping for better days ahead."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 2 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Mason Klein	BAS World KTM Racing Team	05h 23m 04s
2.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1m 09s
3.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 1m 13s
4.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1m 58s
14.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 5m 06s
20.	Joaquim Rodrigues	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 17m 44s

Provisional Overall Rankings – at the end of Stage 2 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Mason Klein	BAS World KTM Racing Team	09h 38m 28s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 1m 41s
3.	Joan Barreda Bort	Monster Energy JB Team	+ 2m 03s
10.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 8m 34s
12.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 9m 11s
16.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 17m 08s
17.	Joaquim Rodrigues	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 29m 40s

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