



Press Release

Ha'il, Saudi Arabia, January 05, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY BUILDS ON THEIR STEADY RUN AT DAKAR 2023

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, continued their steady performance in the fifth stage of the Dakar Rally 2023.

All three riders rode well and finished Stage 5 of the rally, covering around 650 kms in a loop around Ha'il. Sebastian Buhler finished the stage in the 13th fastest time, followed by Franco Caimi in the 18th and Ross Branch in the 21st positions in the Rally GP Class.

Almost full of sandy tracks and vast expanses of dunes and camel grass, Stage 5 was yet another tough and long stage for the competitors.



Due to the time losses in the previous stage, Sebastian Buhler and Ross Branch had to start later in the day towards the back of the group. The tracks were broken and in a bad condition from the competitors who went earlier, making it a lot more difficult for the duo. Despite the tough terrain, Sebastian rode well, finishing just 14 minutes behind the stage winner, and improved his overall rank to 18th in the Rally GP class standings.

Franco had an unusual incident with a wire getting caught in the rear wheel of his and cutting open the brake line of the bike. He was forced to ride the last 150 kms of the race with caution. In the process, he lost some time, yet he braved-on to reach the finish line in good time. He currently holds the 14th position in the overall Rally GP class rankings.



Ross Branch had a great start to the stage. He was maintaining good speed and set to gain a good stage result. However, he faced a few issues with his bike around the refueling point, and lost some time. The Botswanan is hopeful of better stages ahead, with the changes that the team is making to his bike.

Moving on from Ha'il, Stage 6 was initially planned to be the longest stage of the race at 876 kms. However, the heavy rains and flooding in the region has cut short the stage by about 100 kms, and the competitors will camp the night at the bivouac in Riyadh instead of the earlier planned one at Al Duwadimi.



Sebastian Buhler:

"The stage was tough as it was full of off-piste sections and broken tracks. I started towards the back of the group due to my issues in the previous stage, so the route was in a bad condition, making it physically demanding. Overall, the bike was running well, so I had fun and I'm looking forward to the coming stages."

Franco Caimi:

"Today was a difficult stage, but I was feeling good on the bike and enjoyed the desert tracks. However, I faced a small issue with my bike and had to ride with caution during the final 150 kms of the stage. Luckily, I was able to get the bike to the finish line, and I hope for a better day tomorrow."

Ross Branch:

"I started the stage well, and I was happy with how the bike was running. We had the speed to deliver a good result, but I had a few issues before the re-fuelling, which cost me quite some time. We have identified a few changes that I think should improve the bike. I'm keen to get back on the bike and hit the next stage."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 5 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	04h 27m 28s
2.	Jose Ignacio Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 0m 13s
3.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 3m 56s
13.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 13m 39s
18.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 29m 14s
21.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1h 40m 50s

Provisional Overall Rankings – at the end of Stage 5 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Skyler Howes	Husqvarna Factory Racing	23h 16m 37s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 2m 07s
3.	Kevin Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 5m 16s
14.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 1h 08m 14s
18.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3h 48m 13s
21.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6h 12m 50s

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