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HERO MOTOSPORTS BATTLES STAGE 10 AS DAKAR 2026 ENTERS ITS FINAL PHASE

CORNEJO AND BRANCH HOLD STRONG IN THE OVERALL TOP-10

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has successfully completed Stage 10 of the Dakar Rally 2026 as the world's toughest rally event moves into its decisive final phase. Nacho Cornejo from Chile finished the stage with an impressive 5th fastest time, while Botswana's Ross Branch crossed the line in 13th place. After the end of the stage, Cornejo now sits in 7th position in the overall general classification, with Branch holding on to his 8th position.



After losing time due to a navigation error on the first part of the marathon, Cornejo delivered a strong and still controlled ride on the final leg. With no team assistance allowed and the pressure of protecting his overall position, he focused on riding cleanly through the demanding terrain. While a small drop in the rankings is expected, his steady performance keeps him firmly in the fight as Dakar heads into its closing stages.



For Branch, the marathon was all about grit and survival. After two heavy crashes on the first part of the stage — one from pushing too hard and another caused by an unseen obstacle — his main goal became getting the bike safely to the finish. Riding alone in the desert with no outside support, the Botswanan carefully brought his damaged Hero 450 Rally, showing both his determination and the strength of the machine.

Stage 10 was shorter than most, but it was one of the most sand-heavy days of this year's Dakar. With super-soft sand and long dune sections, it was a stage where time could be gained or lost very quickly, making it both demanding and decisive.

Looking ahead to Stage 11, the challenge will come more from navigation than terrain. The tracks allow for good speed, but the route is filled with intersections and split paths that can easily cause confusion. Staying focused and making the right choices will be key for riders aiming to reach the Al Henakiyah bivouac safely after another long day on the bike. The next stage will offer a total of 883 km, one of the longest at Dakar 2026, with 346 km against the clock!



Nacho Cornejo, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"That brings us to the end of the final Marathon Refuge stage of Dakar 2026. It's a bittersweet feeling. Yesterday was very tough for me — I made a navigation mistake and lost a lot of time. Today I felt strong on the bike and was able to push. Even if we have lost one position overall, we are still in the fight. We will keep pushing, day by day, right until the last kilometre. Thank you to everyone for the support."

Ross Branch, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"After a very long and tough marathon, we're finally back. Yesterday was a difficult day — I had two big crashes. The first was my mistake while trying to make up time, and the second came out of nowhere. After that, it was all about getting the bike safely to the finish. The Hero 450 Rally was incredible to survive that and still cover another 500–600 kilometres. Thanks to the whole team — we're here in one piece, and now we focus on getting to the finish the same way."

Provisional Classification - Stage 10:

1.	Adrien Van Beveran	Monster Energy Honda HRC	04h 15m 43s
2.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 03m 49s
3.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 04m 04s
5.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 06m 34s
13.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 21m 23s

Provisional Classification after Stage 10 (Overall):

1.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	41h 35m 13s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 00m 56s
3.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 15m 43s
7.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 01m 31s
8.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02h 21m 29s

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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