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A POWERFUL STAGE 02 PERFORMANCE FROM HERO MOTOSPORTS AT DAKAR 2026

ROSS & NACHO CONTINUE IN 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 the second special stage of the Dakar Rally 2026, delivering another determined performance.

Competing in the premier Rally GP category, Ross Branch continued his strong run by finishing Stage 02 with the 7th fastest time. His teammate Nacho Cornejo crossed the line at the 11th position, while Tobias Ebster completed the demanding stage in the 18th place. Tobias, who is a strong contender in the Rally2 category, registered the 5th fastest time amongst his category rivals.



At the completion of Stage 02, Branch and Cornejo hold strong positions in the overall general classification, placed at 5th and 8th respectively. Ebster continues to show a strong resolve - maintaining his 14th position overall, while also climbing up to the 3rd place in Rally2 - firmly in contention for a final podium in his class.



After an eventful Stage 01 - where Branch set the fastest pace before a speeding penalty pushed him down the ranks - the Botswanan delivered a composed and resilient ride on Stage 02. Despite a brief navigation error and a minor crash early on in the Stage, the airline pilot traversed the brutally rocky terrain with great control and a steady pace - enough to help him retain his overall top-5 position.

Cornejo, who demonstrated exceptional navigation skills on Stage 01, adopted a calculated approach on Stage 02. With sharp stones all across the terrain posing high risk, the Chilean chose to ride smart rather than pushing hard - prioritizing his safety and consistency. Although he conceded a few minutes, the Chilean's focus remains firmly on the bigger picture - ready to fight hard, even as the Rally unfolds Stage by Stage.

For Tobias Ebster, Stage 02 proved to be a true test of endurance and navigation across a challenging 400 km special. The Austrian started the Stage with confidence, handling the rocky terrain and narrow wadis well, before a brief navigational error around 120 kms cost him some valuable time. Despite the setback, Ebster maintained a steady pace to complete the stage well - gaining valuable experience, as the Rally now heads into longer and more demanding stages.

Looking ahead to Stage 03, the rally will head into the vast sandy expanses surrounding AlUla - unveiling a dramatic, postcard-perfect landscape shaped by centuries of natural forces. Competitors will embark on one of the longest days early on in the Rally – a solid 736 km loop around AlUla. Towering rock formations and sculpted terrain create a breathtaking backdrop, but also present significant navigational challenges. With navigation set to play a decisive role, competitors will need to manage their risks carefully.



Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Stage 02 was a really long and physically demanding day. The terrain was extremely rocky and tough on the body. I lost some time in the morning after getting a bit off-track and endured a small crash - but nothing serious. The riders at the front are pushing hard and navigating very well, so we'll need to raise the pace slightly. That said, we're still in a comfortable position overall. I'm feeling good on the bike and in a positive place, and I'm looking forward to taking on tomorrow's Stage."

Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Stage 02 was very rough and rocky, and I approached it with a more measured strategy today. I chose not to push beyond the limit, especially in the stones, as the risk of mistakes or crashes was high. We did lose some time, but the focus was on riding smart and finishing the stage safely. We are still very much in the fight, and we'll continue to battle day by day. It's going to be a tough rally, and we'll give our best in every single stage."

Tobias Ebster, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Stage 02 is done, and the 400-kilometre special was definitely not an easy one. The terrain was very demanding, with big rocks and wadis running through tight canyons, where navigation was the absolute key. I felt good at the start and had a solid rhythm, but after around 120 kilometres, I ended up riding a few extra kilometres, due to a navigation error. Apart from that, the feeling on the bike was positive throughout the day, even though I picked up a few blisters on my hand. This is only Stage 02, and with many kilometres still to come, the focus now is to keep pushing and stay consistent in the stages ahead."

Provisional Classification - Stage 02 (Overall):

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	04h 13m 37s
2.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	+ 01m 35s
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 01m 46s
7.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 03m 56s
11.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 09m 49s
18.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 18m 34s

Provisional Classification after Stage 02 (Overall):

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	07h 42m 24s
2.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Racing Team	+ 00m 30s
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 02m 18s
5.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 07m 46s
8.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 13m 37s
14.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 31m 40s

Provisional Classification -Stage 02 - Rally2:

1.	Martim Ventura	Monster Energy Honda HRC	03h 25m 09s
2.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 01m 28s
3.	Preston Campbell	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 03m 49s
5.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 14m 41s

Provisional Classification after Stage 02 - Rally2:

1.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	07h 56m 24s
2.	Martim Ventura	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 00m 19s
3.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 17m 40s

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