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HERO MOTOSPORTS BUILDS STRONG MOMENTUM AS DAKAR 2026 CROSSES MIDPOINT

CORNEJO AND BRANCH 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 Stage 06 of the Dakar Rally 2026 with another solid day of racing. Nacho Cornejo delivered a strong ride to cross the finish line with the 9th fastest time on the stage, with teammate Ross Branch following closely behind in the 10th position. With these results, at the end of the Stage 06, Cornejo continues to hold 5th place in the overall standings, while Branch remains in 10th position as the rally reaches its midway point.



Cornejo once again showed his calm and controlled riding style on a demanding day. With the pace at the front running high, the Chilean focused on riding with a steady rhythm through the tough terrain. His smart approach helped him reach the rest day in a strong overall position, right in the fight for the second half of the rally.



For Branch, Stage 06 was a day that required patience and care. The conditions were tricky, and the focus was on getting through the stage safely while protecting the bike. The Botswanan rider managed the long and tough day well, crossing the finish without issues and setting himself up for a fresh start in the second week.

Stage 06, which ran from AlUla, was the longest day of Dakar 2026. Riders started early and headed into long stretches of dunes across the Qassim region. After the special stage, a long liaison took the field to the capital Riyadh for the rest day. In total, the day covered 920 kilometres, with 331 kilometres against the clock — making it a key stage before the rally moves into its final week and the most important phase.

After the rest day on 10 January, the rally resumes with a fresh mindset. Riders return recharged, but they must keep their focus, whether they are chasing victory or simply trying to make it through the course. Stage 07 will run through fast, sandy tracks, with dense bushes lining parts of the route. While there are no major technical dangers, the biggest threat will be pushing too hard. With the day stretching close to 900 kilometres in total, concentration will be just as important on the long liaison sections as it is on the special stage. Stage 07 will also be one of the longest days of Dakar 2026, with 462 kilometres against the clock, making it a true test of both speed and endurance.

**Nacho Cornejo, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

"We've completed Stage 06 and wrapped up the first week of Dakar, and it's been a tough one. We gave our best every day and the pace at the front was extremely high, but we've managed to finish the week in a solid position inside the overall top five. Now it's time to make the most of the rest day, reset both physically and mentally, and prepare to push again in the second week. Thank you to everyone for the incredible support."

Ross Branch, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"That's Stage 06 done, and it definitely wasn't one of my favourite days out there. The conditions were tricky, but the most important thing was to push through, get to the finish, and bring the bike back safely for the rest day. Now we can reset, refocus, and start fresh for the second week. I'm really looking forward to what's ahead."

Provisional Classification - Stage 06 (Overall):

1.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	03h 41m 33s
2.	Tosha Scharena	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 01m 14s
3.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+01 m 17s
9.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 12m 29s
10.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 13m 34s

Provisional Classification after Stage 06 (Overall):

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	+ 24h 41m 00s
2.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 00m 45s
3.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 10m 15s
5.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 29m 50s
10.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 36m 10s

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