



SAN JUAN, ARGENTINA | 29 MAY 2026

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY CONCLUDES DESAFÍO RUTA 40 WITH TOP 10 OVERALL FINISH FOR ROSS BRANCH

The 2026 Desafío Ruta 40 concluded in San Juan after five demanding days of rally-raid competition across Argentina's dunes, salt flats, dry riverbeds, and high-altitude mountain terrain.

Ross Branch secured 9th overall and 8th in RallyGP after a determined week that saw the Motswana rider steadily improve his pace and confidence despite several setbacks. A strong performance during the queen stage highlighted his rally before an exhaust issue on the final day cost valuable time, leaving him 16th on Stage 5.





Nacho Cornejo completed his home South American rally in 13th overall and 9th in RallyGP. Despite several clean stages and relentless effort throughout the week, the Chilean rider struggled to find the rhythm and feeling required to challenge further up the order and ultimately finished 13th on the final stage.

The rally also marked Michael Docherty's first event with Hero MotoSports Team Rally. Although his campaign ended prematurely following a crash on Stage 1, the South African demonstrated encouraging speed before his retirement and remained with the team throughout the week in support of the programme.

Beyond the competition itself, Desafío Ruta 40 once again provided an important opportunity for Hero MotoCorp and Hero MotoSports Team Rally to engage with distributors, partners, media, and fans across the Latin American region, reinforcing the brand's growing international presence in rally-raid competition.

Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

“Desafío Ruta 40 has once again provided a demanding week of competition and valuable lessons for the entire team. Unfortunately, Michael's rally came to an end much earlier than anyone would have liked following his crash on Stage 1. Before that, he had shown encouraging speed and competitiveness, which makes the outcome even more disappointing. The positive is that his injuries are not as serious as they could have been, and we look forward to welcoming him back on the bike as soon as he is fully recovered.



Argentina is always a special event for our team. The passion for rally-raid throughout the country is incredible, and it is always valuable for Hero MotoCorp to connect with our partners, media, distributors, and fans across the Latin American region. From a sporting perspective, we are not completely satisfied with the results. Ross showed strong potential throughout the week but lacked the consistency required to challenge where we believe he can be, while Nacho struggled to find the confidence and feeling needed to perform at his usual level. On the positive side, the team and machinery performed optimally throughout the rally, providing a strong technical foundation. We already have testing planned in the coming months, and our objective is clear: continue improving, build greater consistency, and return stronger at the next events.”

Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

“It’s been another incredible week of rally racing here in Argentina. We’ve raced through some truly spectacular terrain, and I’m grateful for every kilometre. The result isn’t exactly where we want to be, but I’m happy with the progress we made through the rally.

A huge thank you to the fans who came out to support us throughout the week, to the entire Hero MotoSports Team Rally crew, and to everyone at Hero MotoCorp who continues to support us. There is still work to do and we know we can be better, but we leave here motivated and focused on finishing the season on a high.”

Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

“I’m disappointed with the result because it isn’t where I expect to be and it isn’t where this team deserves to be. Throughout the week I struggled to find the flow and feeling on the bike that I needed to ride at the level I know I’m capable of. We kept working every day to improve, but it was a struggle.

Everyone in the team continued to give one hundred percent from the first day to the last, and for this I am very thankful. The effort, commitment, and support around me has been incredible, and I want to thank every member of Hero MotoSports Team Rally for that. Now it’s back to work, and we will do everything possible to come back stronger and get ourselves back where we need to be.”

Michael Docherty, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

“This rally definitely didn’t end the way I wanted it to. After such a positive start with the team, it was frustrating to have my race come to an end so early, especially because I felt we had the pace to achieve something special. At the same time, that’s part of rally racing and now the focus is on recovering properly and getting back to full fitness as quickly as possible.

Even though I wasn’t able to continue competing, I wanted to stay here and support the team for the remainder of the event. I’ve learned a lot during my first rally with Hero MotoSports Team Rally and the support I’ve received from everyone involved is key to future success. I’m determined to get back on the bike soon and show what we are capable of together.”

Provisional Rankings - Stage 5

01.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	02h 40m 19s
02.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+00m 50s
03.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+01m 49s
13.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+12m 36s
16.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+14m 29s

Overall Provisional Rankings – After Stage 5

01.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Racing Team	15h 58m 04s
02.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+12m 09s
03.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+18m 04s
09.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+55m 58s
13.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+01h 21m 34s

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