



Zagora, October 16, 2023

## **ANOTHER DAY OF CONSISTENT RESULTS FOR HERO MOTOSPORTS AS MAROC RALLY CROSSES MID-WAY**

### **ROSS BRANCH MOVES TO 2ND OVERALL POSITION**

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, successfully crossed the finish-line of the 3rd Stage of Rallye Du Maroc 2023.



Hero factory riders Ross Branch and Sebastian Buhler have been consistently pushing forward since day 1, and posted excellent stage results yet again. Ross finished Stage 3 in the 5th fastest time, and Buhler in the 11th place. Having successfully crossed the half-way point of the rally, Branch and Buhler now hold the 2nd and 9th ranks in the overall Rally GP class standings of the rally.



Stage 3 on Monday was a 439 km long exploration of the Moroccan terrains, eastward from the bivouac in Zagora, of which 333 kms marked the competitive sections. The participants were entertained through a maze of rough, stony, winding and fast tracks, and some sand and dunes. Though these zones were not new to Maroc Rally, the organizers tried to add more flavor by throwing in some trying twists and complex navigation.

Ross had a rather difficult start in the morning, and he got into a good flow around half-way. He lost a bit of time in the process, and moved down to the overall 2nd place, now 3 minutes and 48 seconds behind the first place holder. Stage 4 tomorrow will be his last opportunity to make up for the lost time, and gain back his lead position. The Botswanan hopes to give his best and earn a great result for himself and for his team.

Sebastian Buhler who got through the stony and rough tracks of the morning well, unfortunately hit a rather tall bump, and broke his front tower. It became difficult for him to continue with a loose tower, and he eventually had to get rid of it before heading to the finish. Buhler made it to the finish safe, but not without losing some precious time.



Moving on from its base for the last 2 days, the rally will now move towards its final destination – Merzouga for the final showdown. Stage 4 is expected to be the most difficult, a tough mix of all that Morocco has to offer – stones, mountains, sand, and dunes of the grand Sahara – 350+ kms of specials, and another 75 kms in transport sections.



**Ross Branch:**

*"Today was a mix bag of emotions. I didn't get a great start this morning, I wasn't feeling very comfortable on the bike. About half-way through, I started finding a good flow, but unfortunately lost a bit of time in the first half. Anyway, I've got a decent starting position for tomorrow, and it will be my last opportunity to make up for lost time. I will give my best tomorrow, and let's hope for the best!"*

**Sebastian Buhler:**

*"The stage today was nice, it was really fast and flowing. Towards the beginning it was quite stony, but I managed to get through that well. However, just before refueling I hit a bump quite hard, and my navigation tower broke and it came out loose. It started becoming difficult to ride, so finally I decided to get rid of it to continue safely. Eventually, I lost some time as I had to ride carefully, but I'm happy to make it to the finish safe. We'll try again tomorrow."*

### Provisional Rankings – Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Honda Team	3h 03m 35s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 3m 06s
3.	Ignacio Cornejo	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 3m 46s
4.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 7m 58s
5.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 7m 58s</b>
11.	<b>Sebastian Buhler</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 34m 28s</b>

### Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	10h 26m 00s
2.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 3m 48s</b>
3.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 6m 09s
9.	<b>Sebastian Buhler</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 1hr 01m 41s</b>

#### For more information:

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