



HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY STARTS THE RALLYE DU MAROC IN TOP GEAR

JOAQUIM RODRIGUES WINS THE PROLOGUE STAGE

Zagora, Morocco, October 8, 2021

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the rally racing team of Hero MotoCorp, the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters, has begun the Rallye Du Maroc with a stage win.



Piloting the Hero Rally 450 bikes, in one of the key races in the build-up to the Dakar 2022, are the trio of Joaquim Rodrigues, Sebastian Buhler and Franco Caimi, who are coming off their great finishes in the 2021 Silk Way Rally.

After successfully completing the administrative checks and vehicle scrutiny on Friday morning, the riders took to the start line of the Prologue stage for a short 10 km loop. Joaquim won the Prologue, closely followed by Caimi and Buhler in fourth and fifth places respectively. By winning the Prologue stage, Joaquim will open the first stage that will put his navigation skills to the test.

The three Hero MotoSports riders have had a good run this season so far with Joaquim 'JRod' Rodrigues achieving a stage win in the Cross-Country Rallies World Championship and Franco Caimi achieving a Podium at the World Championship at the Silk Way Rally, while Sebastian Buhler bagged his first Top-5 finish in a World Championship round at the Silk Way Rally.

The first full stage on Saturday will cover 288 kms of specials through the pristine deserts. With the race coming back to the country after a year's absence, the terrain will be largely unmarked and unexplored, making navigation difficult. Starting and finishing each day at the Bivouac in Zagora, the Rallye du Maroc will see riders covering over 1630kms of special stages over the next five days.

All the top factory teams and elite riders are participating at the Rallye du Maroc, in the deserts of Morocco, to test their latest machines ahead of the Dakar 2022.



Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *"We are here in Morocco for the start of the Rallye du Maroc, which is one of the biggest races before the Dakar 2022. This event also has the highest participation from the top teams and riders who we will also see at the Dakar. In this race, everyone aims to be competitive, but also careful as there is not much time left for the Dakar. We expect a mix of terrain here, almost like a mini-Dakar, and navigation will be key as we are in a barren desert. It is exciting to see all our riders in Top-5 in the Prologue, with another stage win for JRod. We are looking forward to a good race."*

Joaquim Rodrigues, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *"It is great to be back at the start line of the Rallye du Maroc. I was the first rider into the stage, so I had to ride carefully as the stage had a lot of rocks. Everything looks good and the bike is performing well, so I look forward to opening the stage tomorrow."*

Franco Caimi, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *"I am really happy to be here at the end of the Prologue in fourth place. I needed to be strategic with the pace I rode during the prologue. I was able to find a good rhythm and ride without any mistakes. The bike handled perfectly, and I am excited for the first full day of racing tomorrow."*

Sebastian Buhler, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *"It feels nice to be back in Morocco for the Rallye du Maroc. I tried to set a consistent pace, neither too fast nor too slow. It is a long race, and I'm excited to see how it turns out."*



Provisional rankings - Prologue

1.	Joaquim Rodrigues	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	25m 00s
2.	Toby Price	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+08s
3.	Ross Branch	Monster Energy Yamaha Rally	+08s
4.	Franco Caimi	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+20s
5.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+24s



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