



Zagora, October 08, 2024

HERO MOTOSPORTS POWERS THROUGH A CHALLENGING STAGE 02 AT RALLYE DU MAROC '24

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed the second stage of the 5th and final race of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) 2024 – Rally Du Maroc with two of their riders finishing in the top 10 positions.

Competing in the premier Rally GP Class, Hero pilots Nacho Cornejo and Ross Branch crossed the finish line today clocking the 7th and 8th fastest times respectively. At the end of Stage 2, Ross Branch has slipped to the 6th overall position, while his team mate Nacho Cornejo has improved his position to reach the 7th spot in the overall Rally GP Class standings. The team's third rider at the race, Sebastian Buhler, met with an unfortunate crash, and has exited the rally.



Having won yesterday's Stage 1, Ross received the mantle to open an even longer and tougher Stage 2. A strong contender for the World Championship title, Branch focused on a long term strategy today, and avoided pushing very hard. Even though he lost some time in the dunes, the Botswanan brought his bike home without making any navigational or technical mistakes.



The Hero camp's latest recruit - Nacho Cornejo - has been improving consistently since the start of the rally, and clocked his best result of the week so far, in Stage 2. Gaining more confidence on his Hero 450 bike on every day, the Chilean has steadily improved his overall position at the race.

Sebastian Bühler had a great start today, and had moved up to be the second fastest man in the early stretches. However, 142 kms into the special, he encountered a crash in the dunes. Competitors Bradley Cox and Adrien Van Beveren rushed to his aid, and Buhler before he could be airlifted to the Zagora Hospital for further assistance. Unfortunately, this is the end of the road at Rallye Du Maroc for the German, who was also the Runner-up at W2RC Round 3 in Portugal, earlier this year.

The second Stage of Rallye Du Maroc 2024 took the competitors on a 314 kms stretch across the vast Sahara, and an additional 158 km on road sections. The route started on a challenging track with washed-out areas and numerous runway collapses – a result of the recent heavy rains. Competitors tackled muddy patches, tight dunes, and invisible tracks to complete this last loop around Zagora, under the hot Moroccan sun.



Up next is the 3rd Stage of this year's edition of the Rallye Du Maroc. Featuring 328 kms of timed special, and another 360 km in road sections – tomorrow will be the longest day of the race. Traversing north-east into the Saharan landscapes, the rally caravan will move from Zagora to Mengoub - an ancient desert town near the Algerian border.

Ross Branch:

"This race has been a wild ride right from the start, and I'm happy to have completed Stage 2 in one piece. The tracks here are incredibly challenging, and keeps you on your toes throughout. After some navigational challenges yesterday, today felt much smoother. Ricky's crash yesterday really changed the game for us, reminding us that even small mistakes can have big consequences. So now I'm focused on playing the long game, and prioritizing a safe finish every day. I'm incredibly grateful to my team for their support; we're all working together towards a common goal. My thoughts are also with Basti, and I wish him a quick recovery."

Nacho Cornejo:

"I've completed Stage 2 and I'm feeling great on my Hero 450 — my confidence has grown with each passing day. The route today had a lot of dust, but I was able to reach the finish well. I can see my improvement day by day. At the same time, I'm also concerned about my teammate Basti, who had a crash, and had to exit the rally. I hope he recovers soon."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 2 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	03h 23m 44s
2.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 01m 19s
3.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 01m 24s
7.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 08m 51s
8.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 13m 21s

Overall Provisional Rankings after Stage 2 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	03h 23m 44s
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