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HERO MOTOSPORTS SCRIPTS HISTORY – ROSS BRANCH IS THE NEW WORLD CHAMPION!

TEAM ROUNDS UP RALLYE DU MAROC, FINAL RACE OF THE FIM WORLD RALLY RAID CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, today crossed the last finish line of Rallye Du Maroc 2024, and with it, Ross Branch was crowned the new FIM World Rally-Raid Champion. This race was the 5th and final round of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) 2024.

Finishing strong with the highest Championship points, Hero rider Ross - fondly known as the 'Kalahari Ferrari' – has showcased some of his career-best performances, since the beginning of the 2024 season.



In January, he delivered Hero MotoSports their first-ever Dakar podium, by finishing 2nd overall at Dakar 2024 – which was also the first round of the W2RC. A month later, the Botswanan finished 2nd in the Championship at Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, and moved up to the #1 spot in the Championship rankings. He went on to finish 5th overall at both Rally Raid Portugal (April), and Desafio Ruta 40, Argentina (June). This remarkable streak helped Ross maintain the lead position until the end of Round 5 in Morocco this week – eventually rewarding him with the coveted crown.

The rally World Championship for motorbikes dates back to 2003, and since then 10 riders have etched their names into the FIM history books. Ross Branch joins this prestigious list, as the eleventh rider – also becoming the first African rider to win the World Championship.



Making their indelible mark in history, team Hero MotoSports has reached the peak of racing glory in their 8th year of racing. This is the first FIM World title for the team, which also reached very close to winning the Dakar this year. Today's victory cements the Indian manufacturer's place in the history of the sport, making it the sixth manufacturer to earn a FIM World title - joining the big league of larger and older teams. Hero also becomes the first team to break the World Championship streak of the KTM group (comprising of KTM, GasGas, & Husqvarna), which they held since 2014.



At the 25th edition of the Rallye Du Maroc, team Hero was represented by three riders: Ross Branch, Nacho Cornejo, and Sebastian Buhler. After a straightforward prologue at Marakkech, the rally took an adventurous turn with unexpected challenges from rains and floods. The washed out terrain became all the more treacherous, resulting in several competitors retiring midway owing to accidents and injury. Hero rider Sebastian Buhler exited in Stage 2 after a crash, leaving Branch and Cornejo to continue the fight. Covering almost 2500 kms across the grand Sahara, the 6-day Rally has culminated at Mengoub-Bouârfa, near the Algerian border.

The week also saw a heart-warming display of true team spirit and brotherhood at the Hero camp. After Ross' closest competitor in the championship exited the race due to injury, it was understood that he only needed to finish the Rally to win the World Championship. With the entire team aligned towards ensuring a safe finish for the leading star, Nacho Cornejo opted to perform wingman duties for Ross. Ignoring his own race performance, the Chilean stayed by Ross' side throughout the week - ready to jump in at a moment's notice, in case Ross were to run into any trouble.



With this iconic victory, Hero MotoSports moves one step forward in its vision of conquering the global stage. Starting as a rookie team in 2016, the galore of accomplishments reached in 2024 underlines the Indian manufacturer's engineering prowess, persistent hard work, and dedication to the sport. The World Championship victory serves as a powerful motivation for the team, even as they prepare for the 2025 season – which will kick off with the mighty Dakar Rally, next January.

Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"This is our moment of glory - forever etched in the annals of sporting history. Ross, our shining star has brought home our priciest possession – the World Championship. Our journey to this moment started exactly 8 years back – as a small setup with limited resources and big dreams. I'm extremely happy for Ross, and really proud of what our entire team has achieved through consistent hard work and dedication over the years.

Building on our best-ever Dakar performance, we were able to continue our high-performance streak throughout the year - winning the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, and finishing 2nd at the Rally Raid Portugal. Rallye Du Maroc, the last round of the race was of utmost importance – and our entire team stepped up to face this mammoth challenge. I'm proud of Nacho, who did an exceptional job at helping Ross to cross the finish safe. I also wish Basti a safe recovery.

On behalf of the team I would like to thank our dear Chairman Dr. Pawan Munjal for his strong belief and continued support for us. A big congratulations and thank you also to all our partners, supporters, and fans across the globe. Now it's time to celebrate! We'll be back soon, see you at the Dakar!"

Ross Branch:

"No words can capture the magnitude of this incredible moment. I am thrilled to see the entire team's hard work come together, and witnessing everyone's happiness is a success in itself. I feel fortunate to be part of such a passionate family! Thank you, to everyone who believed in me and provided me with this opportunity. It is truly overwhelming!"

As we look ahead into 2025, I see a bright future for our young team — this is just the beginning. This victory represents one of the biggest steps in the right direction for Hero, and I am really excited about the future. Thank you all for your unwavering support."

Nacho Cornejo:

"Finally, Rallye du Maroc 2024 has come to a close. I am super excited about how the rally unfolded, and proud of all the hard work the team has put behind. I'm especially delighted for Ross as he wins the World Championship title. It's rewarding to see years of dedication culminate in this success, and I'm grateful for the efforts of everyone at Hero MotoSports. Now it's time to celebrate, relax, and unwind before we gear up for the next season!"

Overall Rankings after Stage 5 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	15h 45m 06s
2.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 11m 07s
3.	Luciano Benavides	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing	+ 21m 03s
5.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 45m 33s
7.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 15m 01s

2024 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship Standings (After Round 5)

1.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	88 Points
2.	Adrien Van Beveren	Monster Energy Honda Team	76 Points
3.	Tosha Schareina	Monster Energy Honda Team	70 Points
4.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	63 Points
5.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	41 Points

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