



Heromosillo, Sonora (Mexico), April 25, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS MAKES STEADY PROGRESS AT THE SONORA RALLY 2023

SEBASTIAN BUHLER FINISHES STAGE 1 IN TOP-10

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has completed the first stage of Sonora Rally 2023 with a steady performance.

Sebastian Buhler finished the stage in the 10th fastest time of the day, while Ross Branch followed closely behind in the 11th position.



Sebastian Buhler was the third rider to start the Stage, and had a challenging time navigating his way through the dust. However, the young German managed to keep his focus on the road book and made it to the finish in good time. However, an unfortunate penalty for speeding at a particular check point marred his otherwise great performance. He is placed at the 12th overall position.



For Ross Branch, the first stage did not go as well as expected. The Botswanan lost some precious time due to a small navigation mistake halfway through the stage. However, his Hero 450 Rally performed at its best, and he managed to cross the finish-line just outside the top-10. Ross currently holds the 10th position in the overall standings of the Rally.

Stage 1 gave the riders a deeper overview of what to expect over the week - a true Mexican welcome to the first timers at this Rally. The 339 km loop through the ranchlands surrounding Hermosillo featured a 170 km timed section, and an equal amount in liaisons. The competitors found themselves navigating their way through winding desert tracks around sky-high cacti forests, occasional wildlife spotting, and more. The loose dirt and gravel throughout the route made navigation all the more difficult, with riders often getting caught behind each other's dust.

Moving on from Hermosillo, Stage 2 will take the Rally northward to the coastal city of Puerto Penasco, covering a total of 541 kms. The route which follows the coast off the Sea of Cortez could be quite a challenging one under the hot sun, but will also offer the riders some breathtaking views of the azure horizon.

Ross Branch:

"The stage was a bit disappointing, as halfway through the Stage I made a navigation mistake that cost me some precious time. We will work on that to ensure we don't repeat those mistakes. Otherwise, the bike was amazing today, and I had a lot of fun in this incredible desert. We've got 4 more days to catch up, and we will give it our all to recover today's losses."

**Sebastian Buhler:**

"It was a nice stage today, and it did give us an idea how the next stages will be, here in Mexico. Navigation was difficult in particular, and since I started the race early on, I had to navigate quite a lot. But I decided to focus on the road book, and I managed to finish without making any mistakes. Towards the end I was caught up a bit behind the dust of a few other riders. Stage 2 is a new day, and we will give our best to move up."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 1 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Tosha Schareina	Honda Team	1h 33m 25s
2.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 0m 06s
3.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 0m 41s
10.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 3m 38s
11.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 4m 43s

Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 1 (Rally GP Class):

1.	Tosha Schareina	Honda Team	2h 17m 57s
2.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	+ 0m 54s
3.	Pablo Quintanilla	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 1m 29s
10.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 5m 07s
12.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 6m 02s

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