



Puerto Peñasco, Sonora (Mexico), April 27, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS RIDERS IN TOP-10 AS THE SONORA RALLY CROSSES THE HALF-WAY MARK

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, completed the third stage of the Sonora Rally 2023 with both riders in the Top-10 positions.

Crossing the halfway point of the race, Ross Branch and Sebastian Buhler brought their Hero 450s to the beach-camp bivouac at Puerto Peñasco in the 8th and 9th positions respectively. At the end of three stages, Branch and Buhler also hold top-10 overall positions in the Rally.



For Ross Branch, Stage 3 was a long, yet a fulfilling day. While he lost some time during the stage, he is hopeful of continuing to make headway into the top of the leaderboard in the remaining two stages. The Botswanan athlete currently holds the 8th overall rank in the Rally GP class.

Sebastian Buhler too had a quite long and difficult stage in the sun. However, he found a better feeling on the bike than in the previous stage, and enjoyed a more confident ride. His consistent performance pushes him into the overall top-10, at the 10th position.



With 350 kms of timed sections, Stage 3 became the longest special of the week-long Mexican adventure. The first loop around the coastal city of Puerto Peñasco took the competitors south-east on a wild ride through the magnificent outdoors of the vastly unoccupied Sonoran terrain. Lots of sand, dunes, camel grass and broken pistes were on the menu, while the most attractive of all for riders today were the stretches of riding on the beach front. The serene blues of the Sea of Cortez – famous for its whale watching and sport fishing – would occasionally lure the riders to take a pause from the intense riding, and enjoy the scenic beauty of the grand Mexican coastline.

As the Rally crosses its midpoint, the competition within the elite Rally GP class has become neck-to-neck, with very tight time gaps between the riders. With the new terrain posing unexpected dangers, a few of the top W2RC riders have also conceded to injury and retired from the race.

The second loop from Peurto Penasco in Stage 4 will take the riders eastward, deeper into the Sonoran Desert, and closer towards the US border. A long day lies ahead with over 485 km of riding, of which 248 km will form the timed special.



Ross Branch:

"Stage 3 was a long and tough day on the saddle. We had everything thrown at us - hard packs, soft sands, dunes, plus some incredible beach riding. I lost a bit of time, but we still have two days left to give our best shot and catch up with the leaders. Looking forward to the last two stages."

Sebastian Buhler:

"Another stage done here at Sonora Rally. Today I felt better on the bike, and the riding was indeed better than the previous stage. The time gaps are very tight between the competitors, yet my feeling on the bike is getting better, so I am trying to improve daily and finish with a good result."

Provisional Rankings – Stage 3 (Rally GP Class)

1.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	3h 25m 08s
2.	Tosha Schareina	Honda Team	+ 6m 38s
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 6m 40s
8.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 12m 37s
9.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 13m 57s

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

1.	Daniel Sanders	Red Bull Gas Gas Factory Racing	7h 12m 07s
2.	Tosha Schareina	Honda Team	+ 6m 59s
3.	Luciano Benavides	Husqvarna Factory Racing	+ 15m 11s
8.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 21m 00s
10.	Sebastian Buhler	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 26m 27s

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