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## HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY POSTS STRONG RESULTS AS SOUTH AFRICAN SAFARI RALLY 2025 CROSSES MIDPOINT

### ROSS MAKES STRONG COMEBACK FINISHING THIRD

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has concluded the third stage at the South African Safari Rally 2025 – the third round of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) 2025.

Riding in the premier Rally GP class, Ross Branch delivered a commendable performance today by crossing the finish line with the 3rd fastest time, under three minutes behind the stage leader. His teammate Nacho and the latest recruit to the Hero camp, Tobias, also showcased impressive performances by securing 8th and 12th overall positions respectively. Meanwhile, competing in the Rally 2 class, Ebster finished today's stage with the 4th fastest time, proving his increasing confidence on the Hero 450 Rally.





After the end of third stage today, Nacho and Tobias hold strong positions in the overall standings, sitting at 6th and 9th respectively, while Ross is currently placed 13th. Tobias also holds a respectable 2nd position in the Rally 2 class, showcasing Hero MotoSports' growing dominance and depth across both categories.

The "Kalahari Ferrari," kicked off the rally on his home soil in spectacular fashion by winning Stage 1, setting the tone for what promised to be a dominant run. Carrying that momentum into Stage 2, the Botswanan rider surged ahead, leading the pack with confidence. But the day took a dramatic turn just 14 kilometers in, when an unfortunate incident damaged the oil cooler of his bike. With time slipping away in the marathon stage, Ross had no option but to carry out makeshift repairs himself — disconnecting the oil cooler entirely to keep going. It was a heavy blow, costing him over an hour and a half and pushing him down the overall rankings, but Ross didn't back down.

With no assistance possible in the remote marathon camp and a freezing tent night around zero degrees, Ross returned to the saddle for Stage 3 with grit and determination. Despite the physical toll and a machine far from peak condition, he roared back into contention, setting the fastest time in the pack today till the 155 km mark. Remarkably, he rode nearly 600 kilometers without an oil cooler, a testament not only to his resilience but also to the incredible engineering of the Hero 450 Rally bike.

His teammate and Chilean star, Nacho continued to showcase his consistency, delivering yet another solid performance and securing an impressive result. Tobias, meanwhile, lost some time in today's stage due to a display issue on his tablet that affected his roadbook navigation. However, some lost time was later credited, as he also had to stop substantially while dealing with the problem.



Today's Stage 3 marked the conclusion of the marathon stage, taking riders through expansive savanna stretches, flowing dirt tracks, and increasingly complex navigation as the rally pushed deeper into South Africa's hot and arid central regions. Covering a total of 523 km — including 253 km of timed special — it proved to be another grueling test of endurance and focus.

Looking ahead, tomorrow's Stage 4 ramps up the challenge further with a total distance of 693 km – the longest in the rally – including 224 km of timed special. Slated to run around Skilpadshek, the stage begins with fast dirt tracks through the bush before transitioning into tight, rocky trails as the route winds into the mountains — promising yet another tough day for both man and machine.



**Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"Stage 3 was a long and grueling marathon, and yesterday was particularly challenging. At just 14 kilometers in, an unfortunate incident damaged the oil cooler. I lost an hour and a half fixing it, but it wasn't a mechanical fault — just sheer bad luck. What really stood out was the resilience of the bike and the brilliance of our technical team. I rode nearly 600 kilometers without an oil cooler by bypassing it, and the machine held up incredibly well. Huge thanks to our amazing technicians, mechanics, and the entire Hero MotoSports team for building such a robust machine. We may have lost some time, but the battle isn't over yet — there are still a couple of stages to go, and I'm giving it everything I've got. Thanks to everyone for the continued support!"*

**Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"We've completed the marathon stage today – and it definitely wasn't an easy one as it offered a lot in terms of change of directions. I made a navigation error early on, which meant riding in the dust for most of the day. But towards the end, I was able to find a good rhythm again. With two more stages to go, I'll give it my best to improve on the results."*

**Tobias Ebster, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:**

*"Day 2 of the Marathon Stage was definitely a long one. We had some roadbook issues early on, and I ended up having to wait quite a while, which initially impacted my overall standings. However, that was just the provisional classification — I was later given back the time I lost due to the wait. It's never easy dealing with such troubles out there, especially when you're unsure of the route. On the positive side, I was feeling really good on the bike, and we've found a great setup. I made no navigation mistakes, and the flow throughout the stage was excellent. Just two more days to go, and I'm hoping for a strong finish."*

**Provisional Classification of Stage 3 (Overall):**

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	03h 06m 46s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 01m 37s
3.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 02m 39s</b>
8.	<b>Nacho Cornejo</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 13m 52s</b>
12.	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 22m 30s</b>

**Provisional Classification after Stage 3 (Overall):**

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	09h 41m 32s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 02m 48s
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	+ 08m 19s
6.	<b>Nacho Cornejo</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 32m 12s</b>
9.	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 53m 56s</b>
13.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 01h 35m 32s</b>

**Provisional Classification of Stage 3 (Rally2):**

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 03h 22m 51s
2.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 03m 36s
3.	Ruy Barbosa	Xraids Experience	+06m 02s
4.	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 06m 25s</b>

**Provisional Classification after Stage 3 (Rally2):**

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 10h 17m 12s
2.	<b>Tobias Ebster</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	<b>+ 18m 16s</b>
3.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 21m 08s



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