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HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY COMPLETES SOUTH AFRICAN SAFARI RALLY 2025 WITH STRONG RESULTS

NACHO FINISHES 6TH OVERALL, TOBIAS 2ND IN RALLY 2

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

After five grueling stages across the Savannah, Nacho Cornejo and Tobias Ebster secured impressive top-10 finishes overall — Nacho placing 6th and Tobias 9th while Botswana's own Ross Branch finished 11th overall in the rally. In the Rally 2 category, Tobias made a strong debut with Hero MotoSports, clinching 2nd place overall. With this performance, Tobias continues to lead the Rally 2 Championship standings.

Today's Stage 5 witnessed Ross Branch bounce back with a spirited ride, finishing 3rd — just around two minutes off the stage winner — while Nacho continued his run of consistency, securing 7th place. Tobias also maintained his momentum, finishing 9th in the stage.





Meanwhile, Ebster won today's stage in Rally 2, securing the team's first-ever stage win in this category. The young Austrian talent is making a strong case for the title with two races remaining this season. His consistent pace and four podium finishes in Rally 2 at this rally reflect his growing confidence and synergy with the team.

Nacho once again proved to be dependable for the team, finishing top-10 in all stages in this rally. After finishing 7th at Dakar and 6th at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge earlier this season, his current form promises exciting results in the remaining rounds.

The ongoing season has been quite a challenging one for Ross Branch. After an unfortunate crash at Dakar and a premature exit at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, he entered the Safari Rally with renewed energy. His Stage 1 win and Stage 3 podium reaffirm his speed and determination. Despite the setback in Stage 2, Ross remains optimistic and is eager to capitalize on the remaining two rounds of the championship — racing as the reigning World Champion.

With 34 points after the 3rd round, Nacho has moved to the 7th position in the World Championship. Ross, on the other hand, has opened his tally with 8 points in the table.

The South African Safari Rally wrapped up today with the fifth and final stage in Sun City, spanning 216 kilometers — including 118 kilometers of timed special. Though short, the stage was anything but easy, demanding razor-sharp focus through a mix of slick hard-packed cotton soil, river crossings, and loose gravel. The terrain breakdown featured 44% "black turf" typical of local XXL farms, 27% savannah with dense vegetation, 7% rocks, and 16% red earth tracks. A final 33-kilometer liaison brought competitors back to the bivouac, where they were welcomed with celebration.

Making its debut on the W2RC calendar, the South African Safari Rally has quickly earned a reputation as a future classic. The groundbreaking event tested the endurance, adaptability, and technical skill of the world's best rally racers. From fast-flowing savannah trails to rocky outcrops and deceptive black earth, the rally showcased South Africa's raw and rugged beauty while challenging competitors with diverse terrain and shifting weather. As a new addition to the championship, the Safari Rally stands out not only for its stunning landscapes but also for the sheer variety and intensity it brought to the W2RC season.

Up next, Hero MotoSports Team Rally is all set to take on the BP Ultimate Rally-Raid Portugal, scheduled to take place from September 22–28, 2025. As the fourth round in the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) calendar, this event presents a fresh opportunity for the team. Buoyed by the momentum and confidence gained from the South African Safari Rally, the team is more focused than ever to conquer the terrain and leave a lasting mark on the championship. With the final two rounds remaining in this season, Hero MotoSports now looks ahead with renewed motivation and strong momentum across both Rally GP and Rally 2 categories.



Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"Overall, it was a very good race — congratulations to the organizers for delivering a fantastic event. The new terrain brought a fresh challenge and was very well received by the Southern Africa motorsports community. We came in aiming for victory with Ross, and he showed strong form by leading after Stage 1. Unfortunately, a large bird strike in Stage 2 damaged his oil cooler, ending his podium hopes — that's rally, some things are just out of your hands. Still, Ross showed great resilience, finishing the marathon stage and securing two more stage podiums. Most importantly, he proved he's back and competitive after his Dakar injury."

"Nacho had some ups and downs — this terrain doesn't naturally suit his style, but he stayed consistent and we can always depend on him for a solid result. Tobias has an impressive debut with us, adapting quickly, finishing second in Rally2 overall, and closing with a stage win. We couldn't have asked for more. It's a promising outlook for the upcoming races. While we take a short break from racing, the work continues with testing and prep. We're looking forward to joining the championship battle again in Portugal."

Tobias Ebster, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"The last stage is done, and it's an emotional moment for me. It was just 111 km today, and I had a great rhythm until around the 92nd kilometre, when my bike suddenly stopped. A wire was stuck in the rear tyre — I had to stop and cut it out with a side cutter. I also had a small crash and an issue at the checkpoint, but in the end, I'm super happy. We got our first Rally2 stage win for Hero MotoSports today. We made steady progress all week, and I'm proud — not just for myself, but for the entire team. Finishing second overall in Rally2 and keeping our lead in the Rally2 World Championship is a great achievement. A huge thanks to the team for their support and to everyone who came to the track or sent messages — you really kept us going. See you in Portugal in September!"

Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"We are done with the Safari Rally — it's been a super cool week of racing here in South Africa. We had our ups and downs, but also a couple of really strong stages. I was able to perform well in conditions that have typically been a weakness for me, so that's a big positive. Yes, I lost some time here and there, but overall, I believe we're moving in the right direction and making clear improvements in these kinds of terrains. I want to thank the entire team — managers, technicians, physios — everyone who works so hard behind the scenes to support us. Also, a big thank you to all the fans and supporters for the encouragement. We'll keep pushing and working hard for the final two rounds of the year!"

Ross Branch, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally:

"It's the end of the Safari Rally here in South Africa, and what an incredible week of racing it's been! I truly enjoyed every moment — the atmosphere, the people, and the passionate spectators made it all the more special. The bike performed flawlessly as always. Unfortunately, we had a setback due to an incident on Day 2, which impacted our overall standings. But we're back on pace now, the speed is there, and I'm really happy with how everything is coming together. Looking ahead, I'm excited for Morocco and Portugal. A big thank you to everyone for all the support!"

**Provisional Classification of Stage 5 (Overall):**

1.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	01h 23m 17s
2.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 00m 42s
3.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 02m 06s
7.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 06m 06s
9.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 07m 16s

Provisional Classification after Stage 5 (Overall):

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	13h 27m 44s
2.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 08m 55s
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	+10m 00s
6.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 46m 02s
9.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 04m 40s
11.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 55m 19s

Provisional Classification of Stage 5 (Rally2):

1.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01h 30m 33s
2.	Ruy Barbosa	Xraids Experience	+ 00m 38s
3.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 00m 57s

Provisional Classification after Stage 5 (Rally2):

1.	Edgar Canet	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	+ 14h 17m 00s
2.	Tobias Ebster	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 15m 24s
3.	Michael Docherty	BAS World KTM Team	+ 23m 35s

2025 FIM World Rally-Raid Championship Standings (After Round 3):

1.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	88 Points
2.	Luciano Benavides	Redbull KTM Factory Racing	53 Points
3.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda Team	53 Points
7.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	34 Points
9.	Ross Branch	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	8 Points

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