



Mezaira'a, March 01, 2024

## **HERO MOTOSPORTS SEALS LEAD POSITION, CLAIMING THEIR FOURTH STAGE VICTORY AT ADDC '24**

### **AARON MARÈ WINS STAGE 4**

**Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, maintained their overall leadership, as Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge completed 4 of 5 stages.

Aaron Marè secured his second stage win of the week, following his triumph in Stage 2. Showcasing an exceptionally brilliant performance so far in the rally, the South African who joined the team as a substitute rider, has widened his overall lead to over 10 minutes from the nearest competitor. With just one last stage left in the race, the young pilot who is an expert in riding on the Middle East deserts, is on the verge of picking up his first World Championship race victory.

Winner of the previous stage, Ross Branch, did a fantastic job opening the Stage today. He had to work his way through the dunes that got wet from the overnight rains. However, a slight error towards the latter half cost him a few dear minutes. The Botswanan airline pilot is currently 20 minutes away from the podium, owing to an unfortunate delay from a mechanical issue in Stage 1.

Stage 4 of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge was a 345 km loop south of Mezaira'a, including a 232 km special. The special started with a bang, with some stretches of salt flats. Continuing the trend of a majority of sand and dunes, this stage in the Empty Quarter also featured some hefty sand mountains towards the tail end of the day. The surprise rains in the desert have made riding on the sand more difficult for the competitors, requiring them to be all the more cautious.

The final showdown of this year's ADDC will be a 423 km long route taking the competitors from Mezaira'a back to Abu Dhabi. 205 km of timed sections will decide the winners of the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition – who will be awarded at the final ceremony at the Abu Dhabi Energy Center.

**Aaron Maré:**

*"Today I took it pretty safe, just trying to manage the race and the bike, so I could maintain the overall lead. I'm happy with how things turned out today, and things look good for tomorrow. I have to open the route tomorrow, so I'm looking forward to doing that again. Ross did a really great job today opening the stage and navigating the route – watching him in the stages has been a great learning experience for me. Now let's get the job done tomorrow!"*

**Ross Branch:**

*"We knew Stage 4 was going to be hard opening for the whole time. Opening early in the morning on the wet dunes from last night's rain was quite interesting, and difficult. I gave it my best, and I really enjoyed the day. I needed to make up about 20 minutes to get on to the podium, and I gave it my best shot. At this point, everyone is on the gas, and I'm looking forward to the last day tomorrow."*

**Provisional Rankings – Stage 4:**

1.	<b>Aaron Maré</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	3h 21m 41s
2.	Jean-Loup Lèpan	Duust Rally Team	+ 2m 04s
3.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 5m 09s
4.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 7m 31s
5.	Jan Brabec	Strojrent Racing	+ 17m 41s

**Provisional Overall Standings after Stage 4:**

1.	<b>Aaron Maré</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	13h 55m 15s
2.	Konrad Dabrowski	Duust Rally Team	+ 10m 14s
3.	Jean-Loup Lèpan	Duust Rally Team	+ 22m 05s
4.	<b>Ross Branch</b>	<b>Hero MotoSports Team Rally</b>	+ 47m 55s
5.	Jan Brabec	Strojrent Racing	+ 1h 39m 41s

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**For more information:**

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