



Casablanca, 20 June 2023.

## Crossing all the way from West to East

- At the presentation conference for the 23rd Rallye du Maroc, David Castera revealed the route of the race scheduled to run from 12 to 18 October under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. The route will take in the Kingdom's largest deserts from west to east, starting from the international seaside resort of Agadir and finishing in the famous village of Merzouga via Zagora.
- A prologue followed by five stages, two of which will be itinerant and three in the form of loops, totalling 2,240 kilometres, including 1,470 kilometres of special stages have been announced. Three consecutive nights will be spent in bivouacs in keeping with the nomadic tradition.
- The final round of the World Rally-Raid Championship, the Moroccan leg will be decisive for the outcome of the season. An exceptional prize-giving ceremony will be held on the evening of the finish in the magical setting of the Merzouga dunes.
- The final event before 2024, the Rallye du Maroc will also be a dress rehearsal for the Dakar for both amateurs and professionals alike.
- As well as sport, the Rallye du Maroc will be sharing its route with all Moroccans. In Agadir, a concert in the town centre will accompany the start of the race. In Zagora, a school sports ground will be inaugurated. In the countryside the Medical Caravane will continue previous health initiatives.

### Immersed in the heart of the great Moroccan deserts:

It was at the Marriott Hotel in Casablanca, in the presence of the representatives from Royal Moroccan automobile and motorcycle federations, the representatives from main sponsors of the Rally, Afriquia, Maroc Telecom, OCP and numerous Moroccan competitors, that on 20 June **David Castera** unveiled the details of the next edition of the Rallye du Maroc. The final round of the 2023 FIA and FIM World Rally-Raid Championship will gather at the Grand Stade Adrar in Agadir, as it did last year, for the traditional administrative and technical scrutineering from the afternoon of October 11. The racing will start with the Prologue on 13 October not far from the capital of Souss Massa. A podium will be set up in the town centre so that locals and tourists alike will be able to take advantage of the parade and get close to the stars of the sport and amateurs alike.

The following day, the competitors will set off on the first stage between Agadir and Zagora, featuring a stretch of dunes, before the competitors settle into a three-night bivouac on the outskirts of Zagora. Stages 2 and 3 will be run in loops around this encampment.

Stage 2 will feature the Chegaga Erg, the Kingdom's most extensive dune massif. On this occasion, the FIM and FIA routes will be separated. A guarantee of greater safety and enjoyment for the motorcycle competitors, but also synonymous with a challenge for the car navigators who will be opening the track without the benefit of the tracks usually left by the bikes and quads.

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Stage 3 will be the only one without dunes to cross. But the technical nature of the stage and the navigation will be major challenges. There's no rest day on the Rallye du Maroc!

However, you'll need to catch your breath on reaching the halfway point, as **David Castera** has announced: *"Stage 4 between Zagora and Merzouga will be the toughest, most challenging stage of this year's rally. Firstly, in terms of time spent racing against the clock, but also because of the variety of terrain: fast tracks, tricky navigation, camel grass and dune crossings. This will be the most demanding stage, where the most accomplished competitors will take the limelight."*

The final stage, a loop around Merzouga, will be another opportunity for competitors to confront the dunes of Erg Chebbi, the highest in Morocco, at the foot of which will be celebrated the finish. An atypical finale, as the race will not end on a red carpet in a big city, as the discipline is wont to do, but in a natural environment, a magical setting for an extraordinary evening.

## The 2023 final and tomorrow's springboard

As the final round of the W2RC (World Rally-Raid Championship), the Rallye du Maroc will be the centre of motorsport attention and the focus of all the contenders for the 2023 titles.

In the car category, **Stéphane Peterhansel**, aka **'Mr Dakar'**, is set to reappear at the wheel of the factory Audi for the first time since last January. **Nasser Al Attiyah** (Toyota Gazoo Racing), for his part, will have a twofold objective: to win a seventh edition of the Rallye du Maroc and a second World Championship title against, among others, **Sébastien Loeb** (Bahrain Raid Xtreme) and the event's defending champion **Guerlain Chicherit** (GCK Motorsport).

On the bikes, Red Bull KTM Factory Racing is expected to be led by Australian **Toby Price**. Husqvarna Factory Racing will defend the 2022 title of American **Skyler Howes**. Red Bull GasGas Factory Racing will be able to count on reigning World Champion, the British rider **Sam Sunderland**, while Hero MotoSports will, barring any surprises, field Botswana's **Ross Branch**. Last but not least, Monster Energy Honda, which boasts such aces as **Brabec**, **Quintanilla** and **Van Beveren**, may well be trying out a brand new machine developed by HRC for the Dakar.

The last rally-raid before the start of the 2024 season, which begins with the next Dakar, the Rallye du Maroc will attract all the stars of the discipline, as well as many amateurs. For all, it will be a dress rehearsal for the Saudi event.

To prepare the competitors for the challenges of the coming W2RC season, the Rallye du Maroc will once again assume its status as the event where innovations are rolled out. An electronic road book will be used by all participants, a first for the motorcycle competitors.

The Rallye du Maroc aims to be a springboard for the continent's competitors thanks to the Africa Rallye Team's (A.R.T.) programme of training, detection and support for up-and-coming competitors. Supported by the Moroccan automobile and motorcycle federations and the Rallye du Maroc's major partners Afriquia, Maroc Telecom and OCP, the second year of this ambitious programme is already in the starting blocks.

On 17 and 18 June, around twenty candidates took part in the training and selection programme organised by ODC in Merzouga. Three nationalities were represented at this first grouping: alongside the Moroccans, the Mauritanian and Senegalese candidates testified to the continental influence of this young rally-raid school.

On site, **David Castera** and **Loïc Minaudier**, a former motorcycle racer turned top navigator (7th on the 2022 Dakar), ran theoretical workshops before putting the road book into practice. In the near future, the names of the candidates judged suitable for the adventure will be called upon to take part in the next



edition of the Rallye du Maroc, for which the registration fee will be waived. For the other candidates, coaching will continue to take them, step by step, towards their dream.

## A rendez-vous with all Moroccans

The philosophy of the Rallye du Maroc and its major partners is to share rally-raid's values of fraternity and solidarity beyond sport. From the cities to the most remote areas, the passage of the caravan and the race is a moment of shared joy, a concrete trace for the future, a long-term project.

In Agadir, a giant concert featuring national and international headlining acts will once again be offered to the public of the city and its surrounding area ([see programme below](#)). Last year's festival attracted over 50,000 people.

In Zagora, this year's stopover town on the edge of the Drâa Valley, a school sports ground will be inaugurated. This is a concrete and lasting initiative aimed at the younger generation, who are more attracted than ever by the values conveyed by top-level sportsmen and women, of whom there is a wealth of talent in Morocco. The Atlas Lions' performance at the last World Cup is a case in point!

In Merzouga, the site of the rally's prize-giving ceremony, will see crowned the winners of both the Rallye du Maroc and the 2023 World Champions. A spectacle and a day of celebration shared with all the inhabitants of the Chebbi Erg region.

The Rallye du Maroc Medical Caravan, inaugurated in 2021, will resume its consultations and supply of medicines to populations with very little access to healthcare in the desert areas that have counted for so much for the discipline since its creation.

As it does every year, O.D.C. Events will be working with the Moroccan authorities, its local partners and more than thirty national companies supplying the Rallye du Maroc.

All of this valuable expertise will be brought to bear on the ecological, logistical and human challenges of organising this major event in the Moroccan sporting calendar, which for ten days will welcome a caravan of around 1,200 competitors, media and organisers, with the greatest respect for the area and its inhabitants.

## Dates:

- Registration deadline: 27/09,
- Private tests: all day on 10/10 and morning of 11/10
- Technical and administrative scrutineering: 11/10 afternoon and 12/10 at the Grand Stade Adrar, Agadir
- Prologue and podium: 13/10
- Stage 1: 14/10 - Agadir-Zagora
- Stage 2: 15/10 - Zagora-Zagora
- Stage 3: 16/10 - Zagora-Zagora
- Stage 4: 17/10 - Zagora-Merzouga
- Stage 5: 18/10 - Merzouga -Merzouga
- Prize-giving ceremony: 18/10, Merzouga

## Agadir concert programming:

- DJ Aymoun, Toofan, Manal Benchlikha, Dystinct, Douzi, French Montana



## 2023 RDM CONTENTS:

Press release, photos, logos, presentation, animated course:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/rwr77rxokcwf88uc4ltla/h?dl=0&rlkey=s83hk0vlykm8g25r5pxmstbuc>

Official web site:

<https://rallyemaroc.com>

#RallyeDuMaroc #rdm2023 #W2RC

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