

Salta, 1 September 2023

FIA-FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIPS HAT-TRICK FOR AL ATTIYAH AS BENAVIDES CLAIMS HIS FIRST

Key points:

- The Desafío Ruta 40 YPF, the penultimate round of the season, came to an end in Salta today.
- Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing) took the race for the first time in his career. The reigning world champion picked up his third win of the season, bringing his total to 189 points and padding his lead in the championship. Yazeed Al Rajhi (Overdrive Racing) finished third and defended his second place in the championship with 138 points, while his teammate Juan Cruz Yacopini came in second and rose to third in the championship with 109.
- The Hilux dominance earned Toyota Gazoo Racing enough points to renew their manufacturers' world championship title.
- Mitch Guthrie won the T3 race ahead of Cristina Gutiérrez (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) and Austin Jones. The three Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA drivers stayed on the provisional podium of the W2RC, where Guthrie Jr. took over the reins with 174 points to Jones's 171 and Seth Quintero's 167.
- The battle-hardened Shinsuke Umeda (Xtreme Plus) completed the DR40 in T4. He is second in the W2RC.
- Among the RallyGP motorbikes competing in the W2RC, Luciano Benavides (Husqvarna Factory Racing) took his maiden win in a W2RC round, edging out Ricky Brabec (Monster Energy Honda) and Ross Branch (Hero MotoSports). Toby Price (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) surrendered his W2RC lead to Luciano Benavides, now in the hot seat with 80 points to the Australian's 71. Adrien Van Beveren remains third with 66.
- Honda (128 points) snatched the lead from KTM (122) in the manufacturers' championship.
- In Rally2, Bradley Cox (BAS World KTM Racing) opened his account in a W2RC round. Romain Dumontier (Husqvarna HT Rally Raid) moved into the championship lead with 79 points. The Frenchman toppled Paolo Lucci (BAS World KTM Racing), stuck with 66 points following his withdrawal from the race. Jean-Loup Lèpan (Duust Rally) is still third, now with 58 points.
- In Rally3, Ardit Kurtaj (Xraids Experience) emerged victorious from his duel with Mauricio Cueva. The Austrian, second in Mexico, now has 45 championship points, enough to defend his lead in the category.
- Manuel Andújar trounced his adversaries —Rodolfo Guilloli and Juraj Varga— in the quad race, winning the first round of the season that he managed to complete. However, Laisvydas Kancius retained the championship lead with 69 points to Guilloli's 43 and Pablo Copetti's 38.

GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES FOR AL ATTIYAH

30 points separated **Nasser Al Attiyah** and **Yazeed Al Rajhi**, first and second in the W2RC with 136 and 106 points, at the start in La Rioja. Fast-forward to a week later and their positions are the same, but the reigning world champion has widened the gap. It was the Qatari's third victory in a W2RC round this season, following the Dakar and the Sonora Rally. His closest rival pocketed the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, but he had to settle for third in Salta. **Al Attiyah** now holds a 51-point margin going into the season finale in the Rallye du Maroc, with 189 points to **Al Rajhi's** 138. The 24-year-old **Juan Cruz Yacopini** (Overdrive Racing) was the runner-up in the DR40 and bagged enough points to bump **Sébastien Loeb** from the provisional W2RC podium, with 109 points to 101. **Sebastián Halpern** (X-raid Mini JCW) came up short in his title defence campaign after a broken transmission sabotaged his performance in stage 4. The Argentinian is now fifth overall with 90 points.

The Hilux 1-2-3 in round 4 of the championship means Toyota harvested constructor points from **Al Attiyah** in first place (25 points) and **Yacopini** (20) in second. Boasting 230 points after the DR40 to X-raid Mini JCW's 127, Toyota Gazoo Racing have mathematically secured a second consecutive manufacturers' world championship* before the finale.

Mathieu Baumel, who vied for the co-driver championship with **Fabian Lurquin** (BRX) and **Timo Gottschalk** (Overdrive Racing) when the race started in Argentina, is also safe from a last-minute surge by his rivals in Morocco.

The latter two have missed a championship round each: the Dakar, in the case of **Al Rajhi**'s co-driver, and the DR40, in the case of **Loeb**'s navigator. These absences come with a hefty price tag when one faces the ever-consistent duo of **Baumel** and **Al Attiyah**. The Frenchman has 189 points to the German's 119, more than enough to ensure the 2022 co-driver champion will also defend his title.*

Mitch Guthrie won the T3 race ahead of **Cristina Gutiérrez** and **Austin Jones**. **Seth Quintero** (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA), **Mattias Ekström** (South Racing Can-Am) and **João Ferreira** (X-raid Yamaha) all ran into mechanical trouble that put them out of the game while they were spicing up the show. The names of the Americans on the podium of the championship remain the same, but the order not so. **Guthrie** moved up from third before the start in La Rioja to the top spot, with 174 points. **Jones**, the leader after the first three rounds, is now second with 171. **Quintero** slipped from second, one point down on Jones, after Mexico to third now with 167. Seven points separate the three men. The T3 category remains the real nail-biter of the W2RC!

Shinsuke Umeda tamed the DR40 in T4 and pocketed 55 points for his troubles. **Rokas Baciūška** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) will not be losing any sleep over this, as he is miles ahead in the ranking and mathematically assured of the T4 title* with 189 points.

LUCIANO BENAVIDES SNATCHES MAIDEN W2RC WIN

Luciano Benavides scored his first W2RC victory on home soil after his podium finishes in Sonora this year and Morocco last season. The Argentinian is the new leader of the W2RC with 80 points to **Price**'s 71. The Australian, who suffered a mechanical in stage 2, owed his survival in the race only to the generosity of his teammate **Matthias Walkner**, who gave him his part out on the track. **Price** lost an hour in this whole fiasco and spent the remaining three stages in damage control mode. Seventh in the W2RC ranking of the DR40, he will head home with a meagre haul of 9 points —not enough to resist the rise of the *Albiceleste*, who took 25 points with his win, but sufficient to keep **Adrien Van Beveren** (Monster Energy Honda) at bay, The Frenchman finished fourth in the RallyGP W2RC with 66 points to his name, 5 fewer than **Price**. **Ross Branch** (Hero MotoSports), third in the RallyGP W2RC in Salta, ousted **Kevin Benavides** (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) from fourth place in the championship. The Botswanan now has 45 points to 43 for the 2023 Dakar champion, who had to skip the race due to injury.

Monster Energy Honda took over from Red Bull KTM Factory Racing in the manufacturers' ranking. Without **Walkner** at his side, **Price** was hopelessly outnumbered by the four factory HRCs. The Australian scooped up 9 points in Argentina. **Brabec** and **VBA** garnered 33 points for the brand with the wing logo. **Luciano Benavides** netted Husqvarna Factory Racing 25 points. **Ross Branch** scored 16 points for Hero MotoSports, whereas his teammate **Sebastian Bühler** went home empty-handed after retiring from the race. The reds now lead the overall with 128 points to the orange maker's 122. Husqvarna has 114 points. The Indian firm has 64. GasGas remained stuck at 39 following **Sunderland**'s withdrawal.

In Rally2, **Michael Docherty** turned heads this week with consistent performances that placed him at the same level as the best RallyGP entrants, but a small mechanical in stage 2 knocked him out of contention for the DR40. However, when it is not one South African, it is the other, and it was his teammate **Bradley Cox** who stormed to victory. **Alfie Cox**'s son claimed his first W2RC round victory. In the championship, the BAS World KTM Racing riders' failure to complete every round on the calendar has kept them away from the business end of their category. **Romain Dumontier** (Husqvarna HT Rally Raid) will be flying out of Argentina in the lead of the Rally2 championship. The Frenchman was just 3 points behind then-leader **Paolo Lucci** (BAS World KTM Racing) and capitalised on the Italian's withdrawal as a result of a crash to move into the lead with 79 points. **Lucci** is now second, still with 66 points. **Jean-Loup Lèpan** (Duust Rally Raid) also defended his overall podium spot while drawing closer to **Lucci** with 58 points.

In Rally 3, **Ardit Kurtaj** claimed the DR40 and snapped up 25 points. The Xraids Experience has already earned 20 points with second place in the Sonora Rally. He is on track to fulfil his ambition of winning the Rally3 FIM Rally-Raid World Cup. The Albanian-born rider has 45 points to **Massimo Camurri**'s 25 and **Mauricio Cueva**'s 20.

In the quad race, **Manuel Andújar** ran rings around his championship rivals —**Rodolfo Guillioli** and **Juraj Varga**— day in, day out, winning the first round of the season that he managed to complete. This lack of consistency means that he is nowhere to be found near the top of the championship, but the Argentinian 2021 Dakar champion has marked the finale in red on his calendar and could land another big haul there. In the meantime, **Laisvydas Kancius** retained the championship lead with 69 points to **Guillioli**'s 43 and **Pablo Copetti**'s 38.

The Road to Dakar Challenge rewards the top-ranked amateurs in the Rally2 and T4 categories in each W2RC round with free registration for the 2024 Dakar. **Santiago Rostan** and fellow Argentinians **Juan José Semino** and **Gonzalo**

Oltra earned their tickets to Saudi Arabia in Salta. The first round of the 2024 FIA-FIM World Rally-Raid Championship unveiled its calendar yesterday. The Desafío Ruta 40 will again be part of the programme as the fourth race of the season, albeit from 2 to 8 June.

Coming soon in the W2RC - Rallye du Maroc from 12 to 18 October:

- 27 September: closing date for entries
- 11 and 12 October: administrative and technical scrutineering in Agadir
- 13 October: prologue in Agadir
- 14–18 October: 5 stages between Agadir and Merzouga

* pending the official publication of the results by the FIA

Desafío Ruta 40 results [HERE](#)

W2RC standings after 4 races [HERE](#)

W2RC podiums after 4 races:

FIM

FIM World Rally-Raid Championship:

1. Luciano Benavides (Husqvarna Factory Racing) : 80 pts
2. Toby Price (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) : 71 pts
3. Adrien Van Beveren (Monster Energy Honda) : 66 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Rally2:

1. Romain Dumontier (HT Rally Raid Husqvarna Racing) : 79 pts
2. Paolo Lucci (BAS World KTM Racing) : 66 pts
3. Jean-Loup Lèpan (Duust Rally) : 58 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Rally3:

1. Ardit Kurtaj (Xraids Experience) : 45 pts
2. Massimo Camurri (Robert Mann FFR) : 25 pts
3. Mauricio Cueva (Xraids Experience) : 20 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Quad:

1. Laisvydas Kancius (AG Dakar School) : 69 pts
2. Rodolfo Guilloli : 53 pts
3. Juraj Varga : 46 pts

Manufacturers World Championship:

1. Monster Energy Honda : 128 pts
2. Red Bull KTM Factory Racing : 122 pts
3. Husqvarna Factory Racing : 114 pts

FIA

FIA World Rally-Raid Championship:

1. Nasser Al Attiyah – Mathieu Baumel (Toyota Gazoo Racing) : 189 pts
2. Yazeed Al Rajhi – Timo Gottschalk (Overdrive Racing) : 138 pts
3. Juan Cruz Yacopini – Daniel Oliveras (Overdrive Racing) : 109 pts

FIA Rally-Raid Championship for T3:

1. Mitch Guthrie – Kellon Walch (Red Bull Off-Road Jr team USA) : 174 pts
2. Austin Jones – Gustavo Guguelmin (Red Bull Off-Road Jr team USA) : 171 pts
3. Seth Quintero – Dennis Zenz (Red Bull Off-Road Jr team USA) : 167 pts

FIA Rally-Raid Championship for T4:

1. Rokas Baciуска – Oriol Vidal (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) : 189 pts
2. Shinsuke Umeda – Facundo Jatón (Polaris Xtrem +) : 134 pts
3. Eryk Goczał – Oriol Mena (Energylandia Rally) : 86 pts

Manufacturers World Championship:

1. Toyota Gazoo Racing : 230 pts
2. X-raid Mini JCW : 127 pts
3. BAIC ORV : 100 pts

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Press contacts

W2RC

Thida Vuillaume
pressedakar@aso.fr

FIM:

Isabelle Larivière
isabelle.lariviere@fim.ch

FIA

press@fia.com