

Merzouga, 18 October 2023

RALLYE DU MAROC FIA-FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIPS BENAVIDES IN THE NICK OF TIME — TWO IN A ROW FOR AL ATTIYAH

Key points:

- **Yazeed Al Rajhi** (Overdrive Racing) won the car race in the Rallye du Maroc, the last round of the season, and took second place in the championship. **Nasser Al Attiyah** (Toyota Gazoo Racing) successfully defended the title he had secured in 2022. **Juan Cruz Yacopini** (Overdrive Racing) completed a Toyota 1-2-3.
- **Seth Quintero** emerged victorious from the battle for the T3 crown against his fellow Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA by BFG drivers. **Marek Goczał** (Team BBR) claimed the rally.
- **João Ferreira** (South Racing Can-Am) picked up his maiden win in T4, while **Rokas Baciūška** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) wrapped up the title. **Janus van Kasteren** (Boss Machinery) is the new truck champion.
- **Toby Price** (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) won the Rallye du Maroc ahead of **Luciano Benavides** (Husqvarna Factory Racing), but it was not enough for the Australian to wrest the championship from the Argentinian.
- **Bradley Cox** (BAS World KTM Racing) triumphed in the rally and **Romain Dumontier** (HT Rally Raid Husqvarna) clinched the title in Rally2. **Ardit Kurtaj** (Xraids Experience) took top honours in Rally3 and **Laisvydas Kancius** in the quad competition.
- **Toyota (FIA)** and **Honda (FIM)** claimed the constructors' titles.
- The Dakar will inaugurate the 2024 FIA-FIM World Rally-Raid Championships from 5 to 19 January.

RALLY FOR AL RAJHI, TITLE FOR AL ATTIYAH

The 24th edition of the Rallye du Maroc was a real roller-coaster. **Nasser Al Attiyah** was leading the race after winning the first two stages when a mechanical dashed his hopes on the eve of the finish. **Sébastien Loeb** (Bahrain Raid Xtreme) had been giving him a run for his money and would have been able to capitalise on this turn of event... if he himself had not had to withdraw a few kilometres earlier. **Stéphane Peterhansel** emerged victorious from the obstacle course between Zagora and Merzouga and seemed the odds-on favourite to take the title until he too succumbed to a mechanical, this time in the final stage. In the end, it was **Yazeed Al Rajhi** — a paragon of speed, consistency and skill— who stood on top of the podium. This was his second season win, following the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge. Overdrive swept the podium of W2RC entrants, with **Denis Krotov** second at 34'17" and **Juan Cruz Yacopini** third at 57'08". The FIA championship podium remained unchanged: **Al Attiyah** secured his second consecutive title, **Al Rajhi** was the runner-up and **Yacopini** took bronze. **Baumel** had already sealed the deal in the co-drivers' championship, as had Toyota in the constructors' ranking.

T3 was the nail-biter of the FIA season, with three crews still in the running for the title in Morocco. **Mitch Guthrie** was 3 points ahead of **Austin Jones** and 9 clear of **Seth Quintero**. As expected, every stage counted! **Quintero** put on a remarkable display of consistency to finish second overall, sandwiched between the Polish winner, **Marek Goczał** (BBR), and third-placed **Cristina Gutiérrez** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory). This result catapulted the American 5 points ahead of **Guthrie** and 11 clear of **Jones**. In T4, **João Ferreira** gave a masterclass in rallies en route to his maiden victory, beating the FN Speed duo of **Sebastián Guayasamín** (second) and **Rebecca Busi** (third). **Shinsuke Umeda** (Xtreme Plus Polaris CST) came in fourth and achieved his goal of completing each of the five rounds that made up the series. His perseverance propelled him to second place overall, between the champion, **Rokas Baciūška** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory) and the whiz kid **Eryk Goczał** (Energylandia Rally), who became the youngest Dakar winner ever at the age of 18 back in January. **Janus van Kasteren** (Boss Machinery) won the T5 title.

PRICE TAKES VICTORY AS BENAVIDES REIGNS SUPREME

Luciano Benavides landed in Morocco at the top of the RallyGP standings, but with a razor-thin margin of 9 points over **Toby Price** and 14 over **Adrien Van Beveren**. Sparks already flew in the press conference, heralding a ferocious battle that would electrify the Moroccan leg. **Price** got off to a better start than **Benavides** and upped the stakes when he soared to the rally lead in stage 3. At the time, the man from Down Under was the virtual champion because the Argentinian was struggling in fourth place. **Price** built up an unassailable lead to bag the Rallye du

Maroc for the third time, but the Husqvarna rider got his act together with a win in stage 4 and a rock-solid performance in the finale. The high-octane drama saw Benavides take second in the rally and claim the world championship by 4 points over **Price! VBA** was not his usual self in Morocco, but finishing sixth was enough to save his third place in the championship. The Frenchman did his bit for Honda's successful campaign for the constructors' championship. The Japanese maker finished 8 points ahead of KTM, which lost **Matthias Walkner** to a crash during the race. He was just one of several riders to throw in the towel: **Ricky Brabec** ran into mechanical troubles, while **Sam Sunderland** (Red Bull GasGas Factory) pulled out complaining of blurred vision. **Skyler Howes** (Monster Energy Honda) also crashed out of the rally during the prologue, which was his very first appearance on an HRC. **Pablo Quintanilla** flew the flag for Honda in third place. His teammate **Ignacio Cornejo** came in fifth, right after **Ross Branch** and his Hero.

In Rally2, **Romain Dumontier**, a mere 13 points ahead of **Paolo Lucci** at the start of the rally, showed that the best defence is a good offence. The Frenchman finished second in the rally, ahead of **Lucci** in third place, and outgunned the Italian in the fight for the title. **Jean-Loup Lèpan** (Duust Diverse Racing) took the bottom step of the podium. **Bradley Cox** triumphed in the rally and moved up to fourth in the W2RC thanks to this new success, which came a month after his victory in the Desafío Ruta 40. The South African ended the race firing on all cylinders and laid down a marker for the future. In Rally3, the Africa Rallye Team, backed by some of the race sponsors, lit up the fireworks from A to Z, winning four out of five stages with **Cheikh-Yves Jacquemain** (2) and **Souleymane Addahri** (2). The Senegalese rider vanquished the Hungarian **Richárd Hodola** in the fight for the rally, while his Moroccan brother in arms finished third on home soil. **Ardit Kurtaj** (Xraids Experience) wrapped up the title in fourth place. In the quad competition, **Juraj Varga** (Varga Motorsport) and **Rodolfo Guillioli** still had a narrow path to victory over **Laisvydas Kancius** (Story Racing). They gave it their all and finished first and second among the W2RC entrants after a dramatic week of racing, but the Lithuanian, fourth overall, bagged enough points to keep them at bay in the championship.

The FIA-FIM World Rally-Raid Championships came to a close after an intense, action-packed finale that kept fans on the edge of their seats. The competitors will now gear up for the next challenge: W2RC season 3, which will start in January! (*see calendar below*).

** pending the official publication of the results*

2023 W2RC standings [here](#)

2023 W2RC podiums

FIA

FIA World Rally-Raid Championship:

1. Nasser Al Attiyah – Mathieu Baumel (Toyota Gazoo Racing): 205 pts
2. Yazeed Al Rajhi – Timo Gottschalk (Overdrive Racing): 181 pts
3. Juan Cruz Yacopini – Daniel Oliveras (Overdrive Racing): 132 pts

FIA Rally-Raid Championship for T3:

1. Seth Quintero – Dennis Zenz (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA): 201 pts
2. Mitch Guthrie – Kellon Walch (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA): 196 pts
3. Austin Jones – Gustavo Guguelmin (Red Bull Off-Road Jr Team USA): 190 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 +): 162 pts
3. Eryk Goczał – Oriol Mena (Energylandia Rally): 86 pts

FIA Rally-Raid Championship for T5:

1. Janus van Kasteren - Marcel Snijders - Darek Rodewald (Boss Machinery) : 157 pts
2. Tomas Vratny - Bartłomiej Boba - Jaromir Martinec (Fesh Fesh) : 118
3. Martin Macik – David Svanda – Frantisek Tomasek (MM Technology) : 102 pts

FIA Manufacturers World Championship:

1. Toyota Gazoo Racing : 285 pts
2. X-raid Mini JCW : 144 pts
3. Bahrain Raid Xtreme : 125 pts

FIM

FIM World Rally-Raid Championship:

1. Luciano Benavides (Husqvarna Factory Racing) : 100 pts
2. Toby Price (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) : 96 pts
3. Adrien Van Beveren (Monster Energy Honda) : 76 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Rally2:

1. Romain Dumontier (HT Rally Raid Husqvarna Racing) : 99 pts
2. Paolo Lucci (BAS World KTM Racing) : 82 pts
3. Jean-Loup Lèpan (Duust Rally) : 71 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Rally3:

1. Ardit Kurtaj (Xraids Experience) : 58 pts
2. Alexander Chepurko (Duust Diverse Racing) : 27 pts
3. Cheikh-Yves Jacquemain (Africa Rallye Team) : 25 pts

FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Quad:

1. Laisvydas Kancius (Story Racing) : 82 pts
2. Rodolfo Guilloli : 73 pts
3. Juraj Varga (Varga Motorsport Team) : 71 pts

FIM Manufacturers World Championship:

1. Monster Energy Honda : 155 pts
2. Red Bull KTM Factory Racing : 147 pts
3. Husqvarna Factory Racing : 134 pts



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