



The 2025 Dakar Rally bites back on dramatic Stage 3 in Saudi Arabia



(clockwise) Carlos Sainz, Sébastien Loeb, Dania Akeel and Edgar Canet © Kin Marcin/DPPI/Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool

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A first week full of carnage continued at the [2025 Dakar Rally](#) in Saudi Arabia on Stage 3. Among the high-profile racers to get caught out by the fast-paced stage between Bisha and Al Henakiyah was Sébastien Loeb. Despite Loeb

rolling his Dacia Sandrider, the Frenchman dug deep to complete the stage. Let's get the full story...

Three-time Dakar Rally runner-up [Sébastien Loeb](#) came out fighting on Stage 3 until he got caught out by the track. His Dacia Sandrider turned sideways and rolled at high-speed. Despite the car sustaining serious damage Loeb was able to continue after team-mate [Cristina Gutiérrez](#) handed over some spare parts. Loeb completed Stage 3, but his accident early in the day had cost him over an hour.

"I hit a rut that turned us sideways and the car rolled. That took the tyres off two wheels, but we managed to sort it out within 5 minutes. After 50 kilometres we broke a steering rod. Cristina stopped to give us one, but after that the front engine fan stopped working, so we drove at SSV pace during almost all the stage. We lost an hour but it is what it is, we just have to continue." – **Sébastien Loeb**

The timings of five-time Dakar champ [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) are altogether more encouraging for Dacia. The Qatari is just 7m17s behind race leader **Henk Lategan** ahead of tomorrow's marathon stage.

"I'm really happy with our performance and the performance of our car so far. The BFGoodrich tyres are working really well." – **Nasser Al-Attiyah**

With [Carlos Sainz](#) forced out of the rally due to a damaged roll cage, it's [Mattias Ekström](#) who is now leading the charge for Ford M-Sport. Ekström has parked his Ford Raptor T1+ in third overall after three stages and can still count on team-mate [Nani Roma](#) for support.

"I was behind Seb when he crashed. I saw the place and noticed a ditch there. It's a part of the game because we're all pushing very hard. For our part we did our best to drive smart today. We're happy with where we are." – **Mattias Ekström**

Joining [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) of Ford M-Sport in the overall Top 10 are Toyota Hilux drivers [Lucas Moraes](#), [Toby Price](#) and [Seth Quintero](#). Quintero placed second on Stage 3, less than two minutes off from taking his second stage win of the rally so far.

"We got stuck in the dust for quite a long time in the beginning. Once we got past a few guys we were able to set sail. Unfortunately we got a slow puncture just before the finish and that cost us the stage win." – **Seth Quintero**

Despite being over two hours off the overall lead there's also plenty of racing still to come from [Giniel de Villiers](#), [Rokas Baciūška](#) and [Guillaume De Mévius](#).

"It was my first time opening a stage at the Dakar in the Ultimate class. I was pushing but also trying my best to look after the tyres. We had a big problem on the first day but we will keep pushing now." – **Rokas Baciūška**

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[Daniel Sanders](#)'s winning run came to end on Stage 3 as his electronic roadbook stopped working. Things could have been much worse for the Australian rider as he somehow managed to hold onto the overall lead of the bike race. Sanders is obviously keen to get the issue with his electronic roadbook resolved before tomorrow's marathon stage.

"My tablet stopped working so I couldn't navigate. My tablet was cutting in and out all the time. I was lost out there and I picked the wrong person to follow. It's unfortunate and hopefully the organisers can come up with a good solution to fix the problem." – **Daniel Sanders**

Sanders will have his three fellow Red Bull KTM Factory Racing riders for company on the marathon stage. [Luciano Benavides](#) is currently sixth overall while [Edgar Canet](#) leads the Rally2 category after three stages. [Kevin Benavides](#) continues to amaze the entire bivouac by finishing each ultra challenging stage despite still suffering from injuries picked up last season.

"The first 100km of the stage was on volcanic rock so I went slowly through that section. I rode with extra caution there because if you had a crash it could be a bad one." – **Kevin Benavides**

The rookies of the **Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team** continue to push at the very front of the Challenger class. [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) has put his Taurus T3 Max in second overall after three stages, less than 20 minutes behind race leader **Nicolas Cavigliasso**.

"This Dakar is just getting started and we still have a lot of kilometres ahead of us." – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

Guerreiro's team-mate [Corbin Leaverton](#) is also on the overall Challenger class podium. Less than two minutes separate the Portuguese and American drivers.

"We were on sharp, volcanic rock so it was hard on the eyes and the brain. A lot of guys were getting flats but we kept it super clean all day. It was a good day to be running BFG tyres." – **Corbin Leaverton**

Saudi Arabian driver [Dania Akeel](#) was less than 30 seconds off the stage win on the route between Bisha and Al Henakiyah. Akeel's latest drive promotes her to fifth in the Challenger rankings, one place ahead of [Pau Navarro](#).

"It was a rocky, twisty stage with nice navigation to figure out. It was hard to gain time because it was so fast. I haven't checked the results yet but I think we did OK." – **Dania Akeel**

[Francisco López](#) put yesterday's troubles in the SSV class behind him to take the win on Stage 3. The Chilean now holds fourth overall as he targets the overall SSV podium.

"It was a good stage for us today, not too many problems. We lost so much time on the 48-hour stage, but we came back strong today." – **Francisco López**

There's simply no chance to ease up when racing the Dakar and further proof of this comes tomorrow on Stage 4. It's the first half of this edition's marathon stage! As competitors are plunged into the spectacular canyons of AlUla, they must find the right balance between risk and reward – and remember to bring along their own tool kits as they'll be separated from their mechanics overnight.

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Nasser Al-Attiyah © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool



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Daniel Sanders © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool



Luciano Benavides © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool



Kevin Benavides © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

Selected Standings after Stage 3

ULTIMATE

- 1: Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 19:04:53
- 2: Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +07:17
- 3: Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +09:34
- 5: Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +19:40
- 6: Toby Price (AUS) / Sam Sunderland (GBR) – Toyota +20:17
- 8: Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +23:40
- 10: Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +35:04
- 16: Sébastien Loeb (FRA) / Fabian Lurquin (BEL) – Dacia +01:14:45
- 20: Giniel de Villiers (ZAF) / Dirk von Zitzewitz (DEU) – Toyota +02:18:26
- 21: Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +02:18:39
- 23: Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +02:31:16
- 52: Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +36:14:48
- 54: Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +61:03:44

CHALLENGER

- 1: Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 20:24:43
- 2: Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +19:29
- 3: Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +22:09
- 5: Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +28:35
- 6: Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +54:37

SSV

- 1: Xavier De Soultrait (FRA) / Martin Bonnet (FRA) – Polaris 20:48:16
- 4: Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:45:25

BIKE

- 1: Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 20:09:54
- 6: Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +12:37
- 11: Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +44:59
- 27: Kevin Benavides (ARG) – KTM +02:03:52

QUOTES

Sébastien Loeb: "At the start of the special, I thought we were on the tracks, but we were to the side. I hit a rut that turned us sideways and the car rolled. That took the tyres off two wheels, but we managed to sort it out within 5 minutes."

There wasn't so much damage, but after 50 kilometres we broke a steering rod. It's not a serious problem, but our spare part was with the bits of bodywork that had been ripped off when the car rolled. Cristina stopped to give us one, but after that the front engine fan stopped working, so we drove at SSV pace during almost all the stage. It wasn't the kind of day we prefer. We lost an hour but it is what it is, we just have to continue. We'll keep on racing and we'll see, even if winning the rally is starting to look complicated."

Nasser Al-Attiyah: "We started in fifth position and we caught up with everybody in front, but it was difficult to get past in the dust. I'm really happy with our performance and the performance of our car so far. The BFGoodrich tyres are working really well."

Mattias Ekström: "I was behind Seb when he crashed. I saw the place and noticed a ditch there. It's a part of the game because we're all pushing very hard. For our part we did our best to drive smart today. We're happy with where we are."

Lucas Moraes: "Until halfway was pretty good for us but after that we lost the brakes. Then it was all about surviving. We got a puncture as well so it was a tricky day. We're doing well in the overall standings and we've got to keep fighting."

Toby Price: "About 10 kilometres in we had high temperatures in the car. This meant on the fast piste we could only do 130kph. I feel like that really cost us time today. It's frustrating but there's still a long way to go."

Mitch Guthrie Jr.: "Every single day we're just trying to keep it clean because we keep seeing people having issues. We're going for that steady pace everyday so we can stay up front."

Seth Quintero: "We got stuck in the dust for quite a long time in the beginning. Once we got past a few guys we were able to set sail. Unfortunately we got a slow puncture just before the finish and that cost us the stage win."

Giniel de Villiers: "We had a relatively clean stage. There were so many rocks and that makes it difficult to judge the speed. If luck's on your side and you don't get any punctures you can do well on a stage like this."

Rokas Baciūška: "It was my first time opening a stage at the Dakar in the Ultimate class. I was pushing but also trying my best to look after the tyres. We had a big problem on the first day but we will keep pushing now."

Guillaume De Mévius: "We had a puncture at the beginning and that cost us time. Also we were stuck in the dust of some other drivers. Then we saw the bodywork of Loeb's car and saw him on the side of the road. It's a shame and I hope he can finish."

Cristina Gutiérrez: "We saw Seb stopped and we gave him some spare parts and also a spare tyre. I wasn't sure if he could continue. We got a puncture with 80km to go and because we didn't have any spares we had to take it easy until the end."

Nani Roma: "We knew already that this would be a tough race. We started far back today so we had a lots of cars and dust in front of us. After our problem yesterday we have a new mission and tomorrow is the marathon stage."

Daniel Sanders: "My tablet stopped working so I couldn't navigate. My tablet was cutting in and out all the time. I was lost out there and I picked the wrong person to follow. It's unfortunate and hopefully the organisers can come up with a good solution to fix the problem."

Luciano Benavides: "The first part of today's stage was super rocky and tough. One crash there and it could finish your Dakar so I did my best to get through safely. The navigation on the second part of the stage was tricky but I did a good job."

Edgar Canet: "I'm happy to finish this stage because it was a really tough one with stones everywhere. Also the navigation was tricky, but I didn't get lost or crash."

Kevin Benavides: "The first 100km of the stage was on volcanic rock so I went slowly through that section. I rode with extra caution there because if you had a crash it could be a bad one."

Corbin Leaverton: "It felt like a long stage, but it really wasn't that long compared with what we've already had. We were on sharp, volcanic rock so it was hard on the eyes and the brain. A lot of guys were getting flats but we kept it super clean all day. It was a good day to be running BFG tyres."

Gonçalo Guerreiro: "Today we got two punctures. We were fast changing the wheels, but we had to manage the situation so we could reach the finish line. This Dakar is just getting started and we still have a lot of kilometres ahead of us."

Dania Akeel: "It was a rocky, twisty stage with nice navigation to figure out. It was hard to gain time because it was so fast. I haven't checked the results yet but I think we did OK."

Francisco López: "It was a good stage for us today, not too many problems. We lost so much time on the 48-hour stage, but we came back strong today."

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