



## Stage 8 delivers dunes, distance and dangerous terrain as 2025 Dakar Rally reaches Riyadh



(clockwise) Daniel Sanders, Nasser Al-Attiyah, Gonçalo Guerreiro and Mattias Ekström © Flavien Duhamel/Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool

January 13, 2025

Stage 8 delivered the [2025 Dakar Rally](#) convoy over rocks and sand to Saudi Arabia's capital city of Riyadh. Today's timed special stage of over 480 kilometres featured a full menu of Dakar challenges including dunes,

**distance and dangerous terrain. With close to 6,000 kilometres now covered and a crucial 2,000 kilometres still to go, let's see how things now stand in the sand...**

It was an eventful Stage 8 for Red Bull KTM Factory Racing rider [Luciano Benavides](#). When the Argentinian biker saw **Pablo Quintanilla** had crashed 133km into the stage he stopped to check on the Chilean rider, and called on the medical assistance helicopter.

Thankfully the injuries of two-time Dakar runner-up Quintanilla did not appear too serious, although his rally has now come to an end. Meanwhile, Benavides emerged as the Stage 8 winner once his result had been adjusted to account for the time he spent helping Quintanilla.

*"It's never easy to see a crash. I was riding with Adrien (Van Beveren) and we saw Pablo (Quintanilla) on the ground so immediately we called the helicopter. We stayed with Pablo for 30 minutes. It looks like he has nothing broken, but he does have a concussion. After you see a crash like that it's really not easy to carry on racing."* –

**Luciano Benavides**

Benavides is now up to fourth overall in the bike race, 30m48s behind leader and team-mate [Daniel Sanders](#). It was another clever ride from Sanders on Stage 8 who holds an advantage of more than 11 minutes over second place **Tosha Schareina** with four days left of racing.

*"The first 100km was very technical and it caught me out with a few little mistakes. After the refuel it was high-paced and I kept it at the front to catch the bonus."* –

**Daniel Sanders**

Rookie rider [Edgar Canet](#) moved up the rankings to eighth overall after his latest solid performance on the sands of Saudi Arabia. As well as impressing in the general classification, the latest recruit to Red Bull KTM Factory Racing is leading the Rally2 category by 31m11s from **Tobias Ebster**.

*"It was a good stage for me with a lot of navigation. I started second and after 90km we caught Daniel (Sanders) and Tosha (Schareina) also joined us. Then we spent the rest of the day riding as a group and making good navigation all the way."* –

**Edgar Canet**

Turning up the pace in the Challenger class on Stage 8 was [Pau Navarro](#) at the wheel of his Taurus T3 Max. Navarro claimed his first-ever Challenger class stage win during his rookie ride in the category. The stage win follows back-to-back third place stage results for Navarro at the start of this Dakar's second week.

*"We talked before the stage and decided to go for the win today. It was a different strategy for us and we pushed and pushed and pushed. I'm happy with the stage and even happier if we've won it."* –

**Pau Navarro**

[Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) continues to do all he can to chase down Challenger class leader **Nicolas Cavigliasso**. Guerreiro of the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team has held second place in his class since Stage 5. The Portuguese now has four stages to try and claw back the 25m49s that stands between himself and top spot.

*"We were not perfect in the dunes today, but we finished fourth on the stage. We need to get our tyre pressure right for the dunes on the upcoming stages."* – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

We've seen both [Corbin Leaverton](#) and [Dania Akeel](#) fighting back from adversity in the Challenger class at this Dakar. Leaverton narrowly missed out on the Stage 8 podium while Akeel rejoined the rally after being forced to sit out Stage 7 due to her vehicle suffering a broken wishbone while racing from Hail to Al Duwadimi. Akeel now has four stages left to target precious World Championship points.

In the SSV class the fightback of [Francisco López](#) continues to put race leader **Brock Heger** on notice. López has battled back to third overall and has second placed **Xavier De Soultrait** in his sights as well as Heger as the rally heads towards its conclusion on Friday.

*"It was a tricky start to the stage for us. An early puncture and the first 100km all in the dust. So much traffic at the beginning, but the final kilometres on the dunes were fun."* – **Francisco López**

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It was Ultimate class leader **Henk Lategan** who arrived in Riyadh with a stage win to celebrate. The South African increasing his advantage at the front to nearly five minutes over **Yazeed Al Rajhi** in second and close to half an hour on [Mattias Ekström](#) in third. Ekström's day was complicated by a long stretch of opening the road in his Ford Raptor T1+ on Stage 8.

*"We were opening from 50km to 350km and that was difficult. I'm doing everything I can and the plan is to keep doing that for four more stages."* – **Mattias Ekström**

Also losing ground on Lategan between Al Duwadimi and Riyadh was five-time Dakar winner [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#). The Qatari gave up over 12 minutes to Lategan on Stage 8 so expect to see the Dacia driver try and recoup as much of that as he can on tomorrow's stage.

*"It was a very tough day. For some of it we were opening and it was not easy. I'm happy to get this day finished. Now we'll see what happens on the four days we have left."* – **Nasser Al-Attiyah**

Elsewhere in the Ultimate class there were spots in the Top 15 secured by Ford M-Sport team-mates [Nani Roma](#) and [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) as well as the Toyotas of [Rokas Baciūška](#) and [Seth Quintero](#) plus the Dacia of [Cristina Gutiérrez](#).

*"We had a bit of everything today; rocks, dunes, fast and slow tracks. It was also very easy to get lost. We're happy to get through another stage."* – **Cristina Gutiérrez**

Things were tougher on Stage 7 winner [Lucas Moraes](#) and especially for Stage 6 victor [Guillaume De Mévius](#). The Belgian suffered an early stoppage in his MINI and that was just the start of a difficult day that saw him concede over three hours.

*"It was a really tough stage for us. We got a technical problem after 100km of the stage so we had to stop to repair it. After that we were in the dust of everybody and we only had traction from the front wheels. In the dunes that was tough."* –

**Guillaume De Mévius**

A relatively short hop from Riyadh to Haradh awaits on Stage 9 tomorrow, with a timed section measuring 357km. The Dakar has now reached the point where strategy plays an increasingly important role. Starting positions for each stage become crucial as the massive sand dunes of the Empty Quarter desert appear on the horizon.

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Mitch Guthrie Jr. © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



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Edgar Canet © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

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# Selected Standings after Stage 8

## ULTIMATE

1. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 42:05:02
2. Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU) / Timo Gottschalk (DEU) – Toyota +05:41
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +28:55
4. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +34:14
5. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +55:39
8. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:36:54
13. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +03:35:26
14. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +04:38:42
20. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +05:55:37
43. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:53:08
47. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +65:32:26

## CHALLENGER

1. Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 46:06:33
2. Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +27:49
3. Paul Spierings (NLD) / Jan Van Der Stelt (NLD) – Taurus +34:54
4. Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:42:35
6. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +03:54:01
16. Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +71:53:19

## SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 47:33:59
2. Xavier De Soultrait (FRA) / Martin Bonnet (FRA) – Polaris +01:40:26
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:05:49

## BIKE

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 39:29:22
2. Tosha Schareina (ESP) – Honda +11:03
3. Adrien Van Beveren (FRA) – Honda +21:31
4. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +30:48
8. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:21:02

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## QUOTES

**Daniel Sanders:** "At the beginning it was probably the most difficult stage of the whole rally so far for me. The first 100km was very technical and it caught me out with a few little mistakes. After the refuel it was high-paced and I kept it at the front

to catch the bonus.”

**Luciano Benavides:** “It’s never easy to see a crash. I was riding with Adrien (Van Beveren) and we saw Pablo (Quintanilla) on the ground so immediately we called the helicopter. We stayed with Pablo for 30 minutes. It looks like he has nothing broken, but he does have a concussion. After you see a crash like that it’s really not easy to carry on racing.”

**Edgar Canet:** “It was a good stage for me with a lot of navigation. We started second and after 90km we caught Daniel (Sanders) and Tosha (Schareina) also caught us up. Then we spent the rest of the day riding as a group and making good navigation all the way.”

**Pau Navarro:** “Today we started pretty quick. We talked before the stage and decided to go for the win today. It was a different strategy for us and we pushed and pushed and pushed. I’m happy with the stage and even happier if we’ve won it.”

**Francisco López:** “It was a tricky start to the stage for us. An early puncture and the first 100km all in the dust. We couldn’t pass the other cars or the trucks that were ahead of us. So much traffic at the beginning, but the final kilometres on the dunes were fun.”

**Gonçalo Guerreiro:** “That was a long stage, 480 kilometres of racing. We kept it clean to avoid flats. After the refuelling we were in the dust for a long time and we were not perfect in the dunes, but we finished fourth on the stage. We need to get our tyre pressure right for the dunes on the upcoming stages.”

**Corbin Leaverton:** “It was a tough day for my co-driver Taye (Perry) and me because we started up front. Everyone bunched up behind us as we were searching for stuff. After the refuel we were in the dust of the T1 cars and that made it one heck of a run to the finish. I think we got the short end of the stick on that one.”

**Mattias Ekström:** “It’s so tough to judge things when you’re in so much dust. I think I did an OK job in the conditions. We were opening from 50km to 350km and that was difficult. I’m doing everything I can and the plan is to keep doing that for four more stages.”

**Nasser Al-Attayah:** “It was a very tough day. For some of it we were opening and it was not easy. I’m happy to get this day finished. Now we’ll see what happens on the four days we have left.”

**Mitch Guthrie Jr.:** “We started towards the front today so that made things tough. A few guys had caught up by the end of the stage and we were all sitting in each other’s dust. We just did what we could and got to the finish.”

**Seth Quintero:** “Today was the last really big day for us so we tried to make up some time. We started fifth on the road and we finished second or third. Yazeed came past us after 90km and we stuck to his pace. I chased all the big guys today and ran with



them all day.”

**Lucas Moraes:** “The stage was quite nice, but as we were opening the road it was really tricky in the beginning. (Mattias) Ekström came past at about 65km. We were together for around 200km and then Nasser (Al-Attayah), Yazeed (Al Rajhi) and Seth (Quintero) caught us. So we all arrived at the finish together. Every day I’m getting more experience and experience is key to winning this thing one day.”

**Rokas Baciūška:** “Today we started in 16th because of a roadbook mistake yesterday. The navigation was tricky today, we got lost three times. It was such a long stage and very fast, also with dunes at the end.”

**Guillaume De Mévius:** “It was a really tough stage for us. We got a technical problem after 100km of the stage so we had to stop to repair it. After that we were in the dust of everybody and we only had traction from the front wheels. In the dunes that was tough.

**Cristina Gutiérrez:** “We had a bit of everything today; rocks, dunes, fast and slow tracks. It was also very easy to get lost on this stage. We’re happy to get through another stage.”

**Nani Roma:** “It was a strange day. We didn’t have any reference in front or behind to help us judge the speed. The navigation was tricky so we tried to find our way through the stage. I’m happy to be at the end of another very tough stage.”

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