



Stage 9 points the 2025 Dakar Rally in the direction of the dunes



(clockwise) Cristina Gutiérrez, Mitch Guthrie Jr., Corbin Leaverton and Daniel Sanders © Marcelo Maragni/Flavien Duhamel/Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool

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A high-speed dash from Riyadh to Haradh was the mission on Stage 9 of the [2025 Dakar Rally](#). The 357-kilometre timed special stage served as a link between Saudi Arabia's bustling capital city and the barren wilderness of the

Empty Quarter Desert. This Dakar Rally has already travelled 6,500 kilometres, but with three stages left on the dunes the race is only getting started. Let's check in to see who is giving off that main character energy...

Five-time Dakar champion [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) scored his first Ultimate class stage win of this rally as he left Riyadh with his foot to the floor of his Dacia Sandrider. The Qatari's 49th stage win of his illustrious Dakar career puts him 30 seconds behind the Ford Raptor T1+ of [Mattias Ekström](#) who holds third place overall.

"We pushed all day on a very fast stage. Now we still have three days of racing left and we need to do our best on every kilometre." – **Nasser Al-Attiyah**

In front of Ekström there was a change of Ultimate class leader on Stage 9 as **Yazeed Al Rajhi** leapt over **Henk Lategan**. Al Rajhi now leads Lategan by seven minutes with Ekström and Al-Attiyah jostling a further 18 minutes behind. Now come the final three stages of this Dakar with all remaining 500 kilometres hosted by the mighty sand dunes of the Empty Quarter. This contest is still as wide open as the desert plains where it will reach its fascinating conclusion.

"We got through another tricky stage and reached the finish line. Now we'll keep fighting until the end." – **Mattias Ekström**

Taking second on Stage 9 in the Ultimate class was [Guillaume De Mévius](#) at the wheel of his MINI. The Belgian is unlikely to repeat last year's result of an overall podium but has been scoring very useful World Rally-Raid Championship points in the second week of this Dakar.

"Today we started behind so we knew we could push and try for a good time. That's what we did and overall the stage was good for us." – **Guillaume De Mévius**

Also landing themselves in the Top 10 of today's Ultimate category stage were [Rokas Baciūška](#) (Toyota), [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) (Ford) and [Cristina Gutiérrez](#) (Dacia). Among this group of former Challenger class racers it's Guthrie Jr. who maintains a realistic shot at parking on this year's Ultimate class podium. The Californian racer is fifth overall, a little over 30 minutes behind Ford M-Sport team-mate Ekström.

"There were some really tough areas so we just tried to keep it together as best we could. We did a bit of circling around to find waypoints. I'm excited to get back into the dunes tomorrow." – **Mitch Guthrie Jr.**

Despite the high-speed nature of today's stage, it was not without its navigational challenges. Among those getting caught out on the way to Haradh were Toyota Gazoo Racing drivers [Seth Quintero](#) and [Lucas Moraes](#).

"We got lost too many times today and ended up far behind. It was very tricky because all the pistes looked very similar. Tonight we'll talk with the team to try and understand what happened so we can learn for the future." – **Lucas Moraes**

Elsewhere in the convoy we're seeing some real teamwork from the likes of Dacia's Gutiérrez and [Nani Roma](#) of Ford as they put themselves at the service of their better placed team-mates.

"At the beginning I waited for my team-mates so we could support them if we were needed. Then we made some mistakes looking for waypoints and we lost some time. Now we arrive to the Empty Quarter and this has the potential to change everything." – **Nani Roma**

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In the bike race [Luciano Benavides](#) made it back-to-back stage wins on the route between Riyadh and Haradh. The Red Bull KTM Factory Racing rider has been steadily climbing the rankings since Rest Day and now finds himself seven minutes off the overall podium.

"I kept my focus on the roadbook all day and it was more of a mental challenge than anything else. The dunes are the terrain that I like the most so I can't wait to go there tomorrow." – **Luciano Benavides**

Benavides's Red Bull KTM Factory Racing team-mate [Daniel 'Chucky' Sanders](#) has bossed the two-wheel contest at this Dakar since the Prologue Stage. The Australian is now bringing a lead of 14m45s over second placed **Tosha Schareina** to the Empty Quarter Desert.

"It was a good start but after the first neutralisation section we came into somewhere that I remembered from other years. The dirt was really white so I couldn't see the tracks properly. Navigation was tough so I was just trying to make sure I was on the right spots." – **Daniel Sanders**

In the Rally2 class there was a fifth stage win for rookie [Edgar Canet](#) who continues to impress on debut. Canet's closest Rally2 competitor is [Tobias Ebster](#) and the pair are also riding high in the general classification of the bike race, both occupying spots in the overall Top 10. There was drama for Ebster on Stage 9, stopping at the scene of fellow biker **Romain Dumontier's** crash.

"I stopped when a friend of mine crashed hard 190km into the stage. After that my electronic roadbook wasn't working properly so it was a frustrating day. We now have three more days left so we must keep going." – **Tobias Ebster**

In the Challenger class there's still pressure being applied on race leader **Nicolas Cavigliasso** by [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) of the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team. The Portuguese rookie has consistently kept the gap between his Taurus T3 Max and the front of the race to under 30 minutes and wants to get as close as he can in the dunes.

"This is Dakar, it doesn't matter how fast you are if you can't find the right way to go. Now it's the dunes and I have no fear, let's go!" – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

Guerreiro is joined in the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team by fellow rookie [Corbin Leaverton](#). The American racing driver found himself in the thick of the action on Stage 9 of the Challenger contest.

"The navigation was so tough and us guys at the front were looking for these hidden waypoints. We were doing donuts and nearly hitting each other. It was crazy." – **Corbin Leaverton**

Also completing another tough stage were the Taurus T3 Max machines driven by [Pau Navarro](#) and [Dania Akeel](#). Saudi Arabian driver Akeel will be hoping that local knowledge of the dunes proves invaluable over the coming days.

In the SSV class [Francisco 'Chaleco' López](#) is tonight celebrating his fourth stage win of this Dakar. The Chilean is third overall, but wants to climb one or two places in the rankings on the remaining three stages.

"It was a very difficult day. One or two waypoints were especially hard to find. Now we switch our focus to the dunes for the final three days." – **Francisco 'Chaleco' López**

If you're looking at Stage 10's distance of just 123km and thinking that the rally organisers are being too kind to the competitors, think again! We're now deep into the Empty Quarter Desert and the final three days of this Dakar will be raced exclusively in this region, which is home to sand dunes of up to 250m high.

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Mattias Ekström © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



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Francisco López © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Tobias Ebster © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool



Luciano Benavides © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Edgar Canet © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

Selected Standings after Stage 9

ULTIMATE

1. Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU) / Timo Gottschalk (DEU) – Toyota 45:06:54
2. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota +07:09
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +24:50
4. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +25:21
5. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +56:28
8. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:46:07
13. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +03:34:01
14. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +04:57:30
19. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +07:04:31
40. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:58:41
44. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +66:16:45

CHALLENGER

1. Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 49:38:09
2. Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +27:58
3. Paul Spierings (NLD) / Jan Van Der Stelt (NLD) – Taurus +01:03:55
4. Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:47:35
6. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +03:53:22
29. Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +73:22:59

SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 51:13:20
2. Xavier De Soultrait (FRA) / Martin Bonnet (FRA) – Polaris +01:49:53
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:07:38

BIKE

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 47:45:34
2. Tosha Schareina (ESP) – Honda +14:45
3. Adrien Van Beveren (FRA) – Honda +20:21
4. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +27:44
8. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:28:36

QUOTES

Nasser Al-Attiyah: “We pushed all day on a very fast stage. Now we still have three days of racing left and we need to do our best on every kilometre.”

Mattias Ekström: "There were some tricky bits of navigation and overall the stage wasn't so enjoyable. But we got through it and reached the finish line. Now we'll keep fighting until the end."

Mitch Guthrie Jr.: "It was a good day for us, but also not an easy day. There were some really tough areas so we just tried to keep it together as best we could. We did a bit of circling around to find waypoints. I'm excited to get back into the dunes tomorrow."

Guillaume De Mévius: "Today we started behind so we knew we could push and try for a good time. That's what we did and overall the stage was good for us. After our problems yesterday it was good to be fast today."

Rokas Baciūška: "It's another stage down and one day closer to the finish. For sure we will try to push in the dunes and try and do something good. Since we lost nearly three hours in the first week we've been enjoying ourselves and take as much experience as possible. In the dunes you can get stuck, you can roll... anything can happen."

Lucas Moraes: "We got lost too many times today and ended up far behind. It was very tricky because all the pistes looked very similar. Tonight we'll talk with the team to try and understand what happened so we can learn for the future."

Cristina Gutiérrez: "For us it was a nightmare. We were in the dust and also close to the motorbikes. I think it was the same for everyone. Now we have three days of racing in the Empty Quarter so a lot can still change in the overall."

Nani Roma: "At the beginning I waited for my team-mates so we could support them if we were needed. Then we made some mistakes looking for waypoints and we lost some time. Now we arrive to the Empty Quarter and this has the potential to change everything."

Luciano Benavides: "Today was really good. I opened the stage all day so of course I did some navigation mistakes but nothing major. I kept my focus on the roadbook all day and it was more of a mental challenge than anything else. The dunes are the terrain that I like the most so I can't wait to go there tomorrow."

Daniel Sanders: "It was a good start but after the first neutralisation section we came into somewhere that I remembered from other years. The dirt was really white so I couldn't see the tracks properly. Navigation was tough so I was just trying to make sure I was on the right spots."

Edgar Canet: "It was a super fast 300km before a final 50km with a lot of navigation. I got a little lost there, but overall I'm happy with how things went. Now I need to focus on tomorrow when we will arrive to the dunes of the Empty Quarter. My goal remains just to finish the rally so I'm not looking at the overall rankings."

Tobias Ebster: "I stopped when a friend of mine crashed hard 190km into the stage."

After that my electronic roadbook wasn't working properly. They changed it at the neutralisation, but a few kilometres later I started having the same problems so it was a frustrating day. We now have three more days left so we must keep going."

Gonçalo Guerreiro: "I think everybody did a few mistakes today in the navigation. This is Dakar, it doesn't matter how fast you are if you can't find the right way to go. Now it's the dunes and I have no fear, let's go!"

Corbin Leaverton: "Today was crazy. The first part of the day was just wide open and top speed. Then after the fuel stop it was absolute madness. The navigation was so tough and us guys at the front were looking for these hidden waypoints. We were doing donuts and nearly hitting each other. Then we got bunched up with some T1s, everyone going every which way. It was crazy."

Pau Navarro: "We started OK, not pushing too much. After the refuelling we got lost so we just tried to arrived to the finish. We'll keep on pushing in the dunes."

Francisco López: "It was a very difficult day. One or two waypoints were especially hard to find. Now we switch our focus to the dunes for the final three days."

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