



## Grit and determination come out on top during dune battle on Stage 10 of Dakar Rally



(clockwise) Nani Roma, Dania Akeel, Daniel Sanders and Gonçalo Guerreiro © Kin Marcin/Flavien Duhamel/Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

January 15, 2025

The [2025 Dakar Rally](#)'s convoy were plunged into the dunes of the Empty Quarter Desert on Stage 10. We saw a pair of remarkable comeback stories on the sands of Saudi Arabia as local favourite [Dania Akeel](#) rode up front with

former bike and car class winner [Nani Roma](#). The 250-metre-high dunes of the Empty Quarter have been hugely anticipated since the start of the rally and today we got a taste of what's to come. Tomorrow's Stage 11 has been billed as the most unpredictable day of the entire rally and has the potential to erase big gaps on the leaderboards. Here's how things stand on the eve of this rally's longest day of dunes...

Luck was not on [Dania Akeel](#)'s side at the start of the Dakar Rally's second week as a broken wishbone on her vehicle saw a shot at the overall Challenger class podium slip away. However, on Stage 10 the Saudi Arabian driver was back in the game and pulled off one of the most incredible results in the entire history of the Dakar.

Not only did Akeel win the Challenger class stage, but her Taurus T3 Max was the third fastest four-wheeled machine through the stage as she beat all but two Ultimate class cars. The stage win gives Akeel five precious World Rally-Raid Championship points and another highlight in her racing career.

*"I saw the board at the end of the stage and it said we were third overall! The dunes were so much fun today, it was a bit like sailing a boat on the sea. Because we started so far at the back we didn't get stuck behind too much dust."* – **Dania Akeel**

Akeel was joined on the Challenger podium by fellow Taurus T3 Max drivers [Pau Navarro](#) and [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#). Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team driver Guerreiro shaved a couple of minutes off the gap between himself and race leader **Nicolas Cavigliasso** in the dunes. 26 minutes now separates these two at the front of the Challenger contest.

*"This was our first big dunes of the rally. Overall I'm happy with our performance and I think we have the pace to do better."* – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

Also representing the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team at this Dakar is American racer [Corbin Leaverton](#). He's been waiting since the start of the rally to get up close and personal with the Empty Quarter Desert and he enjoyed his day in the dunes, taking fifth place on the stage.

*"I may not have won the stage today, but I think I've had the most fun since I've been out here. Me and Pau (Navarro) were going at it all day and we broke away from the pack. We were battling back and forth, I'll give credit to Pau for leading out most of it."* – **Corbin Leaverton**

Emulating Akeel's feat of outrunning bigger machines was [Francisco 'Chaleco' López](#) in the SSV class. The fifth stage win of this Dakar for Chaleco sees him third overall in the SSV race with two more rolls of the dice to try and improve that position.

*"The sun was so bright so that complicated things. We pushed as much as we could and we're happy with our result. Tomorrow will be a long day in the sun."* – **Francisco López**

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Bike race leader [Daniel 'Chucky' Sanders](#) cruised over the dunes on Stage 10 and finished the day with an increased advantage at the top of the leaderboard. The Red Bull KTM Factory Racing rider has been leading since day one of this Dakar and has five stage wins so far, equalling a record set by fellow Australian [Toby Price](#) in 2016.

*"It was a hot and hard and tricky stage. The sand was super soft and the stage was very technical. Now we're ready for a big day tomorrow."* – **Daniel Sanders**

Sanders's KTM team-mate [Luciano Benavides](#) has not given up hope of a podium finish at this Dakar. The 2023 World Rally-Raid Championship winner's previous best result at the Dakar is sixth overall. The Argentinian biker is currently fourth overall, 6m50s off the podium, with two stages left to race. The unpredictability of the Empty Quarter dunes return tomorrow and everything is still up for grabs in the bike race.

*"Today was hot in the Empty Quarter and I felt a little bit sick in one moment. It was really hard to see the dunes and the drops so that was not the best feeling."* – **Luciano Benavides**

The third Red Bull KTM Factory Racing biker left in the rally is rookie [Edgar Canet](#) and it was another solid day of riding from him. Canet scored fifth overall on Stage 10 to consolidate top spot in the Rally2 category and eighth place overall.

[Nani Roma](#) of Ford M-Sport capped off an incredible fightback by winning Stage 10 of the Ultimate class contest. A winner on both two and four wheels in the past, Roma suffered a tough first week of this Dakar. His mental resilience was underlined today when he put his Ford Raptor T1+ back at the business end of the race with his first Dakar stage win since 2015 and a first-ever for Ford M-Sport.

*"I'm happy for the team because of all the hard work they have been putting in. Today we saw a positive outcome for all we have been doing to improve the car during this rally."* – **Nani Roma**

Also putting previous misfortune behind him on Stage 10 was [Lucas Moraes](#) of Toyota Gazoo Racing. The Brazilian finished third on his Dakar debut in 2022 and today in the Empty Quarter Desert he took second place on Stage 10.

Moraes was joined in the Top 10 on today's sandy stage by team-mate [Seth Quintero](#). Eighth on the stage keeps the American driver eighth overall. Quintero's fellow Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team driver [Cristina Gutiérrez](#) took sixth on the stage, her fourth Top 10 stage result behind the wheel of her Dacia Sandrider.

At the front of the overall Ultimate class rankings **Henk Lategan** overtook **Yazeed Al Rajhi** to take back the lead he'd lost on Stage 9. The gap between the two frontrunners stands at 2m27s ahead of tomorrow's penultimate stage. Third placed [Mattias Ekström](#) of Ford M-Sport is poised to take advantage of any slip ups by either of the Toyota drivers ahead of him in the general classification.

*"The target was not to win today, but to have a good starting position for tomorrow. Finishing on the podium would be nice but there's still two tough days to go."* –

**Mattias Ekström**

Five-time Dakar winner [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) was hoping to make up some time in the Empty Quarter Desert today, but was undone by a navigation error early on. The Dacia driver remains fourth overall and has two more stages left to exert pressure on the leaders after today's disappointment.

*"I'm very disappointed, but what can you do? We could have had a great stage, but we'll see what position we're in and what we can do tomorrow. Every day is very important and we had a good pace, but we lost a lot of time. This is the most disappointing day of my life."* – **Nasser Al-Attiyah**

Anything can happen on the dunes and Ford's [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) is less than an hour off the front of the Ultimate class in fifth overall. Nobody quite knows what to expect on tomorrow's 284-kilometre stage in the Empty Quarter Desert and Guthrie Jr. could find himself thrust forward into the title mix. On Stage 10 the Californian found a way to keep cool in the heat.

*"We didn't have A/C on the stage so we left the door open the entire time and made it to the finish. It was a tough day, a tiring day but a good day."* – **Mitch Guthrie Jr.**

Elsewhere in the Ultimate class the finish line is nearly in sight for [Rokas Baciūška](#) and [Guillaume De Mévius](#) who have both endured their fair share of ups and downs at this Dakar.

*"On this stage we had some proper cut dunes and it was not easy to find the rhythm. Tomorrow will be a longer stage on the dunes and even tougher so we'll see what happens."* – **Rokas Baciūška**

Everything is still up for grabs on Stage 11 tomorrow, the penultimate stage of this year's Dakar. The unpredictability of racing in the Empty Quarter Desert means that big time gaps can soon be wiped out by one false move. On tomorrow's stage the truck class are given their own route away from the rest of the convoy, allowing the rally's big beasts to really push each other to the limit.

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Mattias Ekström © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Seth Quintero © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Nasser Al-Attiyah © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Lucas Moraes © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Rokas Baciūška © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



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Gonçalo Guerreiro © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool



Tobias Ebster © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Luciano Benavides © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Edgar Canet © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

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# Selected Standings after Stage 10

## ULTIMATE

1. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 47:29:57
2. Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU) / Timo Gottschalk (DEU) – Toyota +02:27
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +26:46
4. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +30:21
5. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +54:05
8. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:36:45
13. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +03:32:37
14. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +04:56:19
19. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +07:47:52
41. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:47:57
45. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +66:00:16

## CHALLENGER

1. Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 51:54:09
2. Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +26:00
3. Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:42:53
5. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +03:51:41
30. Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +73:15:13

## SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 53:25:31
2. Xavier De Soultrait (FRA) / Martin Bonnet (FRA) – Polaris +01:49:53
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:06:47

## BIKE (OVERALL)

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 49:53:59
2. Tosha Schareina (ESP) – Honda +16:31
3. Adrien Van Beveren (FRA) – Honda +22:24
4. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +29:14
8. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:30:48

## BIKE (RALLY2)

1. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM 51:24:47
  2. Tobias Ebster (AUT) – KTM +34:52
  3. Romain Dumontier (FRA) – Honda +01:23:32
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## QUOTES

**Dania Akeel:** "I saw the board at the end of the stage and it said we were third overall! The dunes were so much fun today, it was a bit like sailing a boat on the sea. Because we started so far at the back we didn't get stuck behind too much dust."

**Gonçalo Guerreiro:** "This was our first big dunes of the rally. We pushed a little bit to know where is the pace. We caught up with Corbin (Leaverton) and then Pau (Navarro) came past but we couldn't get the tow. Overall I'm happy with our performance and I think we have the pace to do better in the dunes."

**Pau Navarro:** "Today we started OK. (Yasir) Seaidan came past, but 50km after that we saw him stopped with a broken wishbone. We kept going and overtook some cars. The dunes were nice, not too complicated."

**Corbin Leaverton:** "I may not have won the stage today, but I think I've had the most fun since I've been out here. Me and Pau (Navarro) were going at it all day and we were trying to break away from the pack. We were battling back and forth, I'll give credit to Pau for leading out most of it."

**Francisco López:** "Today was a very nice stage on the dunes. The sun was so bright so that complicated things. We pushed as much as we could and we're happy with our result. Tomorrow will be a long day in the sun."

**Daniel Sanders:** "It was a hot and hard and tricky stage. The sand was super soft and the stage was very technical. At the end we were all bunched up so that was pretty tricky as well. Now we're ready for a big day tomorrow."

**Luciano Benavides:** "Today was hot in the Empty Quarter and I felt a little bit sick in one moment. It was really hard to see the dunes and the drops so that was not the best feeling. At the end lots of riders were waiting so they would not open tomorrow's big stage."

**Nani Roma:** "We were fast today on the dunes. I'm happy for the team because of all the hard work they have been putting in. Today we saw a positive outcome for all we have been doing to improve the car during this rally."

**Nasser Al-Attayah:** "I'm very disappointed, but what can you do? We could have had a great stage, but we'll see what position we're in and what we can do tomorrow. Every day is very important and we had a good pace, but we lost a lot of time. This is the most disappointing day of my life."

**Mattias Ekström:** "It was a nice stage in the dunes. We were second on the road for most of the stage. The target was not to win today, but to have a good starting position for tomorrow. Finishing on the podium would be nice but there's still two tough days to go."

**Mitch Guthrie Jr.:** "We didn't have A/C the whole stage so we left the door open the

entire time and made it to the finish. It was a tough day, a tiring day but a good day."

**Seth Quintero:** "It wasn't the best stage for us. We had some shift issues and then I ended up stuck in the dunes for about four or five minutes. It's a bummer to make a rookie mistake like that. I'm frustrated with myself about that."

**Lucas Moraes:** "It was a short but intense stage. The car was bouncing around and my head was hitting the seat all the time. Armand (Monleon) was really good on the navigation and helped me to see the drops. Thanks to Toyota Gazoo Racing for this amazing car. Let's see how the big one goes tomorrow."

**Rokas Baciūška:** "We had a long liaison today and a short stage. On the stage we had some proper cut dunes and it was not easy to find the rhythm. Tomorrow will be a longer stage on the dunes and even tougher so we'll see what happens."

**Cristina Gutiérrez:** "On tomorrow's stage we will do our maximum to help our teammate Nasser (Al-Attiyah). I'm happy with our stage today and happy with the car. We were super fast. It's my first stage in the dunes with this car and I'm happy, although we still need to learn a lot."