



Stage 4 proves 2025 Dakar Rally is a marathon, not a sprint



(clockwise) Mitch Guthrie Jr., Nasser Al-Attiyah, Daniel Sanders and Gonalo Guerreiro © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

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The level of difficulty has been turned up to the max at the [47th Dakar Rally](#) and Stage 4 followed that trend. A 415-kilometre volcanic rock garden spreading from Al Henakiyah to AIUla was a particularly unforgiving

proposition for competitors' tyres. Survival was the name of the game on the first part of this year's Marathon Stage with racers left to fend for themselves tonight away from their mechanics. With more of the same promised for tomorrow, let's find out who picked the fastest line on the rocky road towards the canyons of AIUla...

There's been no let up in pace from [Daniel Sanders](#) on all six days of racing so far at this Dakar. Stage 4 marked another victory for the Australian who has increased his lead of the bike race to 12m36s. After trouble with his electronic tablet yesterday, Sanders was given back 4m54s by race organisers before setting off on Stage 4.

"I know this area and it can be tricky so you've just got to focus. It looks like I'm opening the stage tomorrow so the pressure is on to not lose too much time." –

Daniel Sanders

Sanders is joined tonight in the Marathon Stage bivouac in AIUla by three more Red Bull KTM Factory Racing riders. [Luciano Benavides](#) is currently eighth overall, 36 minutes behind Sanders in the general classification. [Edgar Canet](#) leads the Rally2 category by 3m24s from his nearest rival.

"I found this stage more mentally draining than physically because of all the navigation we had to do. I've an issue with my back tyre and will have to take care on the fast piste tomorrow." – **Edgar Canet**

If rookie rider Canet needs any advice he can ask KTM team-mate and two-time Dakar winner [Kevin Benavides](#). Under Marathon Stage rules the riders were given just 90 minutes to work on their bikes after completing today's route between Al Henakiyah and AIUla.

"The first part of this Marathon Stage was incredibly long, more than five hours of racing. There were lines everywhere so I was really focused on the navigation and doing my own work." – **Kevin Benavides**

After a crash on Stage 3 forced [Mohammed Balooshi](#) to withdraw from the race he was taken to a local hospital. Today Balooshi was discharged from hospital and we look forward to seeing him back his bike soon.

Five-time Dakar winner [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) and his Dacia Sandrider came to a halt 118km into Stage 4. Not for the first time in this rally it was Dacia team-mate [Cristina Gutiérrez](#) who came to the rescue as she supplied Al-Attiyah with a replacement steering arm.

The repairs cost the Qatari over 45 minutes but once he got moving again he clawed back 12 minutes on stage winner **Yazeed Al Rajhi**. After an eventful opening day of the Marathon Stage, the gap between Al-Attiyah and overall Ultimate class leader **Henk Lategan** stands at 35m53s.

"We stopped twice today. Once for a puncture and the second time for a broken rear

arm. We waited for Cristina and then we fixed it. It was not an easy stage for us but we finished it. The car is OK for tomorrow and we have plenty of spare parts.” –

Nasser Al-Attiyah

Al-Attiyah and Cristina said farewell to Dacia team-mate [Sébastien Loeb](#) before the start of Stage 4. Loeb was prevented from carrying on his Dakar after the FIA inspected his Dacia Sandrider at the conclusion of Stage 3. The damage sustained to the roll cage when Loeb’s Dacia rolled on yesterday’s stage was deemed too much to allow it to continue racing.

Back to Stage 4 and it’s clear that the jagged rocks that littered the 415-kilometre timed special stage meant that punctures were inevitable. Despite driving with extreme caution a number of top drivers suffered a series of flats on the stage.

“We got two punctures early on, it didn’t matter how slow we were going. It was just the luck of the draw and we were on the unlucky side. In total we got three punctures and it seems like we lost about an hour.” – **Seth Quintero**

The dream of a podium finish on their first outing in the Ultimate class is over for [Toby Price](#) and co-driver [Sam Sunderland](#). After a string of strong results on the opening stages, the duo came to a stop on Stage 4 and were waiting more than two hours for their service truck to arrive.

Among those coming through the stage with less problems than most were the Ford M-Sport pair of [Mattias Ekström](#) and [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) plus [Lucas Moraes](#) of Toyota Gazoo Racing. Ekström stays third overall and Moraes sits fifth while Guthrie Jr. is up to sixth in the Ultimate class rankings.

“It was a good stage for us. No issues apart from one flat about 100km from the finish. We just tried to keep a good pace all day. We saw other cars off to the side so we knew we just needed to bring it to the finish line.” – **Mitch Guthrie Jr.**

The rookies of the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team swapped positions on the overall Challenger class podium. It was [Corbin Leaverton](#) who leapfrogged team-mate [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) to take second overall. American racer Leaverton is currently 25m14s behind Challenger class leader Nicolas Cavigliasso.

“We’re halfway through the Marathon Stage and we’re not even halfway through the rally. We live to fight another day.” – **Corbin Leaverton**

Guerreiro is four minutes back from fellow Dakar debutant Leaverton and tomorrow’s mission for the pair will be to protect their podium places on day two of the Marathon Stage. Also behind the wheel of Taurus T3 Max machines are Pau Navarro and Dania Akeel, this duo are fifth and sixth respectively in the Challenger race.

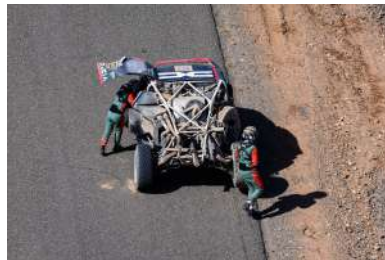
“There were so many stones and I’ve never seen something like this. We managed as best we could and still got one flat tyre. We have more than 400 kilometres and our car is in perfect condition.” – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

In the SSV class the upturn of fortunes for [Francisco López](#) continues after a tough start to this year's rally. Another podium finish on Stage 4 keeps the Chilean in the hunt for an overall Top 3 finish.

"All the rocks and also the navigation made this a complicated stage. Aside from the tough terrain the landscape in AlUla is always very beautiful." – **Francisco López**

Under Marathon Stage rules all competitors will spend this evening separated from their mechanics, meaning any repairs needed will be a solo job. What follows tomorrow on the road to Hail is a classic mix of sandy and rocky tracks on a timed special stage of 428km as the rally heads towards its halfway point.

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Sébastien Loeb © DPPI/Red Bull Content Pool



Mattias Ekström © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool



Cristina Gutiérrez © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool



Lucas Moraes © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool



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Luciano Benavides © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool



Kevin Benavides © Marcelo Maragni/Red Bull Content Pool

Selected Standings after Stage 4

ULTIMATE

1. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 23:36:24
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +21:40
5. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +33:25
6. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +34:09
7. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +35:53
13. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:31:04
16. Giniel de Villiers (ZAF) / Dirk von Zitzewitz (DEU) – Toyota +02:33:27
18. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +02:46:08
24. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +03:32:42
35. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:14:59
37. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +61:48:38

CHALLENGER

- 1: Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 25:32:26
2. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +25:14
3. Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +29:35
5. Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:17:11
6. Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +01:20:59

SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 26:10:40
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:37:47

BIKE

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 25:15:33
8. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +35:57
12. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:06:09
27. Kevin Benavides (ARG) – KTM +02:28:50

QUOTES

Daniel Sanders: “I got a bit lost before catching up to Nacho (Cornejo) and Tosha (Schareina). Then I was in the dust. I know this area and it can be tricky so you’ve just got to focus. It looks like I’m opening tomorrow so the pressure is on to not lose too much time.”

Luciano Benavides: "I had some problems after passing the rocky areas and I got fully lost. After the refuelling I had to push like crazy and I think I recovered some minutes."

Edgar Canet: "I found this stage more mentally draining than physical because of all the navigation we had to do. I've an issue with my back tyre and will have to take care on the fast piste tomorrow."

Kevin Benavides: "The first part of this Marathon Stage was incredibly long, more than five hours of racing. There were lines everywhere so I was really focused on the navigation and doing my own work."

Nasser Al-Attiyah: "We stopped twice today. Once for a puncture and the second time for a broken rear arm. We waited for Cristina and then we could fix it. It was not an easy stage for us but we finished it. The car is OK for tomorrow and we have plenty of spare parts."

Lucas Moraes: "It was a very demanding stage and we tried to carry a good rhythm. Then suddenly we got one, two, three punctures. The most important thing today was to finish and we're still Top 5 overall."

Mitch Guthrie Jr.: "It was a good stage for us. No issues apart from one flat about 100km from the finish. We just tried to keep a good pace all day. We saw other cars off to the side so we knew we just needed to bring it to the finish line."

Rokas Baciuška: "We were going so good and then after 90km we got a puncture. Then 20km later another one so after that we had to manage until the finish. I don't think there was a way to drive on this stage and avoid punctures. Then we lost fourth gear. It was tough and now we have some work to do in the service zone."

Seth Quintero: "The stage was pretty bad. We got two punctures early on, it didn't matter how slow we were going. It was just the luck of the draw and we were on the unlucky side. In total we got three punctures and it seems like we lost about an hour. That puts us two hours off the lead and in a race like this that's quite a bit."

Guillaume De Mévius: "It wasn't supposed to be so rocky today, but it was fully rocky all the way. In total we got four punctures so we had to repair one tyre and one rim. It was tough and disappointing."

Cristina Gutiérrez: "We had a good rhythm at the beginning. Our role in the team is to help Nasser as much as we can. So when we saw him stopped we gave him the part he needed and my co-driver Pablo helped to make the repairs as fast as he could. Even if Nasser is now 30 minutes off the lead he is still in the game because this Dakar is so crazy."

Corbin Leaverton: “It was a little bit frustrating for me today. There’s still a few issues that we need to improve. Ultimately, it was a good day for us. We’re halfway through the Marathon Stage and we’re not even halfway through the rally. We live to fight another day.”

Gonçalo Guerreiro: “There were so many stones and I’ve never seen something like this. We managed as best we could and still got one flat tyre. We have more than 400 kilometres and our car is in perfect condition.”

Francisco López: “All the rocks and also the navigation made this a complicated stage. Aside from the tough terrain the landscape in AIUla is always very beautiful.”

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