



## Looking back on a wild ride during week one of the 2025 Dakar Rally



(clockwise) Mitch Guthrie Jr., Seth Quintero, Daniel Sanders and Gonçalo Guerreiro © Kin Marcin/Marcelo Maragni/Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool

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The [2025 Dakar Rally](#) has served up an opening week like nothing we've ever witnessed before, not even at the world's toughest race! As the convoy travelled from Bisha to Hail they were confronted with a 48-hour Chrono

**Stage plus a two-day unassisted Marathon Stage. The relentless nature of the rally has taken its toll and we've already seen high-profile retirements. Competitors who remain in the race are now rewarded with a well-earned Rest Day.**

It's the halfway point of the 2025 Dakar Rally so let's take a look at some facts and figures that emerged during the first seven days of racing...

## 22

American racer [Seth Quintero](#) is no stranger to making history at the Dakar Rally. The former Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team driver won an amazing 12 of the 13 stages in the Challenger class at the 2022 Dakar. Quintero was rewriting the history books again this week, becoming the youngest ever driver to win a pair of Ultimate stages at 22 years old.

## 6

[Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) has followed fellow Californian Quintero in graduating from racing the Challenger category with the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team to now taking a seat in the Ultimate class. Guthrie Jr. has quickly got to grips with his Ford Raptor T1+ and holds sixth place overall in the Ultimate rankings, making him the category's highest placed rookie. With seven stages left to go Guthrie Jr. is 22 minutes behind his Ford M-Sport team-mate [Mattias Ekström](#) who occupies the final spot on the overall podium.

## 3

There have been three high-profile retirements from the Ultimate class during the first week of this Dakar. Early exits have come for defending champion [Carlos Sainz](#) as well as [Sébastien Loeb](#) and [Laia Sanz](#). This trio of premature departures have all been a result of the FIA determining their roll cages had sustained too much damage after the cars were flipped during the race.

## 4

Australian biker [Daniel Sanders](#) has been in determined mood during the Dakar's opening week. The Red Bull KTM Factory Racing rider followed up his win on the Prologue with victories on Stages 1 and 2. Another win on Stage 4 has helped Sanders to arrive at the Rest Day with a lead of over seven minutes in the two-wheel contest.

**Watch how Daniel Sanders survived 1,000km in the desert unsupported [here](#)**

## 16:39

It was only days before the start of the 2025 Dakar Rally when [Edgar Canet](#) got the call to join Red Bull KTM Factory Racing. Being part of a team with 19 Dakar bike race wins was clearly the opportunity of a lifetime for the 19-year-old rider from Catalonia.

Canet has spent the first week of this Dakar repaying the faith shown in him and currently leads the Rally2 category by 16m39s and is in the Top 10 overall.

## 5

One of the most popular racers inside and outside of the Dakar Rally bivouac is [Dania Akeel](#). The Saudi Arabian driver has fans all over her homeland and they have cheered her on to fifth place in the Challenger class at Rest Day. Akeel looks set to beat her best ever finish of eighth overall and could even reach the podium in the second week.

## 12h04m06s

Challenger race rookie [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) admitted that he had never driven anything like the Dakar's 48-hour Chrono Stage before (not many people have!). The Portuguese driver spent over 12 hours racing against the clock on the stage to post the fourth fastest time in class. The new recruit to the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team reached the Rest Day in second overall, just 28m34s behind Challenger class leader Nicolas Cavigliasso.

## 10

Across the Ultimate, Challenger, SSV and Bike categories the [Red Bull Desert Wings](#) squad have scored 10 stage wins in total during the first week of the Dakar Rally. Added to the stage wins of Quintero and Sanders there have also been victories for [Rokas Baciūška](#), [Corbin Leaverton](#) and [Francisco 'Chaleco' López](#). The Red Bull Desert Wings have claimed an impressive 25 podium results on the five stages so far, plus the Prologue. [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) and [Luciano Benavides](#) have been among the competitors receiving honours at the daily prize giving ceremonies in the bivouac.

## 2

Two-time Dakar bike race champion [Kevin Benavides](#) arrived in Saudi Arabia for the rally after an injury hit season. The Red Bull KTM Factory Racing biker dug deep to complete the first week of the Dakar, but during Rest Day he took the difficult decision to withdraw from the rally.

*"It's been frustrating as my mind knows how to race fast and stay with the top guys – I've proved that in previous years – my body just isn't capable of maintaining that sort of pace at the moment. It's because of this feeling that I have made the decision to withdraw for the rally – the risk of further injury is too great. I want to thank the team and the fans for all the support they have given, and I hope to be back racing again soon."* – **Kevin Benavides**

## 3,560

We've had seven days of racing so far at this Dakar; including a Prologue, 48-hour Chrono and Marathon Stage. The convoy have covered a total distance of 3,560 kilometres on the perilous path connecting the Bisha Start Camp and the Hail Rest

Day.

**4,245**

This distance to travel in the second week is even greater than week one! There's a further 4,245 kilometres to cover as all roads lead to the Empty Quarter desert during the 2025 Dakar Rally's final week. After stops in Al Duwadimi, Riyadh and Haradh it will be among Saudi Arabia's most formidable sand dunes that this latest edition of the rally will ultimately be won and lost. However, anyone who reaches the finish line of this latest Dakar route on January 17 can consider themselves a true champion of the desert.

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Edgar Canet © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Luciano Benavides © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool



Kevin Benavides © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool

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# Selected Standings at Rest Day

## ULTIMATE

1. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 28:10:11
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +20:54
4. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +35:00
5. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +41:55
6. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +42:44
9. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:30:10
15. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +03:28:19
16. Giniel de Villiers (ZAF) / Dirk von Zitzewitz (DEU) – Toyota +03:32:17
18. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +03:50:19
26. Toby Price (AUS) / Sam Sunderland (GBR) – Toyota +06:06:51
45. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:34:39
48. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +65:04:34

## CHALLENGER

- 1: Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 30:38:42
- 2: Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +28:34
- 5: Dania Akeel (SAU) / Stéphane Duplé (FRA) – Taurus +01:37:59
- 6: Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:47:16
8. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +04:14:56

## SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 31:48:54
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +02:01:59

## BIKE

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 30:20:15
  7. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +24:15
  10. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:01:44
  26. Kevin Benavides (ARG) – KTM +03:10:56
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## QUOTES

**Seth Quintero:** "I want to keep going. To be honest, Rest Day is not my favourite day. I'd rather just keep it going and see what happens. I find when I hit Rest Day my mind can get out of the zone and tiredness starts to kick in. That's why I'd rather just keep going."

**Mitch Guthrie Jr.:** "We're here at Rest Day in sixth place overall. The next week will be the time to pick it up. We've got the Empty Quarter still to come and a long way to go. We'll be out to make up some time on the guys in front of us."

**Daniel Sanders:** "The aim for Rest Day is to just chill out a bit. Get some good sleep and some good food. A bit of a massage would be good, maybe a swim. Anything that can help to loosen me up a bit. It's been a tough week, but I've enjoyed it."

**Edgar Canet:** "I think the rally is going to be a lot different next week. We'll be in the sand dunes so we'll have to see how that goes. If I do the second week like I made the first week I'll be happy. I feel like I'm improving day by day."

**Dania Akeel:** "The Rest Day is always a good chance to just hang out with the other drivers at the Red Bull BBQ. We end up talking about other things away from driving. Obviously we all love the game, but it's also good to get to know people and how they are off the race track. For me this helps to bring down the intensity a little. "

**Gonçalo Guerreiro:** "I made some mistakes in the first week, but I'm a rookie so I think that's normal. The car is going perfectly but I need a day to rest. I'm really happy with how the things have been going so far at my first Dakar Rally."

**Kevin Benavides:** "The first week was definitely tough with over 30 hours of racing. I'm not in my best physical condition so it has been a fight every day, but I'm really proud to have finished the first week of the toughest rally in the world. That alone is a great achievement! It's been frustrating as my mind knows how to race fast and stay with the top guys – I've proved that in previous years – my body just isn't capable of maintaining that sort of pace at the moment. It's because of this feeling that I have made the decision to withdraw for the rally – the risk of further injury is too great. I want to thank the team and the fans for all the support they have given, and I hope to be back racing again soon."



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