



2025 Dakar Rally reaches a fork in the road during sandy Stage 7



(clockwise) Lucas Moraes, Nasser Al-Attiyah, Corbin Leaverton and Edgar Canet © Marcelo Maragni/Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool

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The [2025 Dakar Rally](#) once again kept the convoy guessing on a shortened Stage 7 due to the previous day's racing going long into the night. Today's loop stage around the Al Duwadimi bivouac was slightly reduced, but still

challenged competitors to over 400 kilometres of racing against the clock. Once again four-wheel and two-wheel vehicles took separate routes which upped the navigational workload all round. Here's what happened...

Confusion clouded the front of the Ultimate class race on Stage 7 due to an incorrect note in the roadbook. The leading group including [Nasser Al-Attiyah](#) and [Guillaume De Mévius](#) lost nearly an hour searching in vain for a waypoint. Race organisers later announced that a 20km segment would be delimited from the timings due to the roadbook error.

With the Stage 7 results recalculated it's clear that pressure has increased on Ultimate class **Henk Lategan**. The South African now leads by just 21 seconds from Saudi Arabia **Yazeed Al Rajhi** in second overall. A little over 10 minutes back from Lategan in third place overall is the Ford Raptor T1+ of Mattias Ekström.

"There was a problem in the roadbook so we ended up looking like clowns in the circus. That bit wasn't so fun but afterwards we drove as well as we could." – **Mattias Ekström**

Closing in on the overall podium as the days tick by is five-time Dakar winner Al-Attiyah. The Qatari was frustrated more than most by the incorrect note in the roadbook as he was one of the first on the scene. However, once the timings had been recalculated Al-Attiyah had moved to 21m57s off race leader Lategan with five stages remaining.

"When you do the roadbook you need to do it properly and check it many, many times. It created a big risk with so many cars all together. Thankfully everything else was working well for us and the car is good." – **Nasser Al-Attiyah**

Wasting no time in bouncing back from major disappointment on Stage 7 was Toyota Gazoo Racing driver [Lucas Moraes](#). The Brazilian lost more than three hours yesterday due to a broken shock absorber and saw his dreams of an overall win slip away. However, Moraes battled back today to take his first stage win of the year and claim some valuable World Championship points.

"Because of the issues we had yesterday we started at the back and this helped us to find our way. I'm happy to get another stage win for us, for Brazil and for Toyota. It was very important to come back strong after yesterday. If you want to be a champion you have to learn to move on fast and leave things in the past." – **Lucas Moraes**

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Joining Moraes on the Stage 7 podium were a pair of Ford Raptor T1+ machines belonging to Ekström and [Mitch Guthrie Jr.](#) It's Guthrie Jr.'s first podium result during his rookie race in the Ultimate class as the American continues to be one of this year's revelations, currently in fifth place overall.

"There was the navigation issue in the middle which kind of messed things up, but it was still a good stage for us. It was kind of a bummer that everyone got grouped up together because we got stuck in dust. It was a pretty messed up stage." – **Mitch Guthrie Jr.**

Guthrie Jr.'s fellow Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team graduates [Seth Quintero](#) and [Cristina Gutiérrez](#) were also well placed on Stage 7. The American and the Spaniard came in fifth and sixth respectively on the loop around Al Duwadimi.

"It was a very difficult stage in terms of navigation. Lots of cars got lost in the same place and then after that we were all in a group. Because of the dust it was difficult to overtake. We also had a puncture, but we were still able to do a very good result." – **Cristina Gutiérrez**

Also still in the hunt for stage results as the Ultimate class convoy moves towards the Empty Quarter Desert are [Guillaume De Mévius](#), [Rokas Baciūška](#) and [Nani Roma](#).

There were however a pair of high-profile withdrawals in the Ultimate category ahead of Stage 7. [Toby Price](#) was forced to call time on his rally due to co-driver [Sam Sunderland](#) suffering a concussion. The story was similar for 2009 Dakar winner [Giniel de Villiers](#), his co-driver **Dirk von Zitzewitz** sustained a neck injury and was unable to continue.

"It's a shame to finish like this and we're both gutted. We can fix cars but not humans, and Sam is family to me so his health comes first." – **Toby Price**

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A fabulous start to the Dakar's second week continues for rookie [Corbin Leaverton](#) in the Challenger class. After second place on Stage 6 the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team driver went one better today and took the stage win.

"I know this is my first Dakar, but man it seems tough. The navigation, the rocks, all of it. We're happy to get through another day. Again, shoutout to my co-driver Taya (Perry)." – **Corbin Leaverton**

Leaverton's team-mate and fellow rookie [Gonçalo Guerreiro](#) was able to consolidate his position in second overall on Stage 7. The Portuguese member of the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team is now 30m37s behind Challenger class leader **Nicolas Cavigliasso** in the general classification.

"We're giving everything we have on every stage. I'm happy we could pass the big dunes today because we know there are more coming." – **Gonçalo Guerreiro**

There was also another Challenger stage podium for [Pau Navarro](#) who finished third for the second consecutive day. Meanwhile, [Dania Akeel](#) was forced to skip Stage 7 due to arriving back at the bivouac at 6:30am after her vehicle suffered broken wishbone on Stage 6. The plan is for the Saudi Arabian driver to rejoin the rally on

Stage 8 and fight for World Championship points in the Empty Quarter desert.

In the SSV class [Francisco López](#) closed in on **Xavier De Soultrait** in second overall. The Chilean cut the gap to 20 minutes between him and the Frenchman in the general classification. Third place López remains nearly two hours behind American **Brock Heger** who leads the SSV race.

"I'm happy with how things are going and ready for the five days that we have left to race. I'm focused on the finish line." – **Francisco López**

It was another faultless performance on two wheels today by bike race leader [Daniel Sanders](#). The Red Bull KTM Factory Racing biker won the stage and stretched his lead at the top of the rankings to 15m33s. If Sanders can maintain his position until the conclusion of Stage 12 he will deliver KTM their 20th Dakar Rally bike race title.

"My speed was good, my head was good and my focus was good. It was a much better day compared with yesterday. We're here to win and we're doing everything we can to make that happen." – **Daniel Sanders**

Rookie [Edgar Canet](#) finished second on Stage 7 to strengthen his position in the overall Top 10 and at the front of the Rally2 contest. [Luciano Benavides](#), also riding for Red Bull KTM Factory Racing, is now up to fifth overall after a strong start to week two.

"I'm super happy with the bike and with my speed. Unfortunately I did a navigation mistake at 70km and after that I had to push all day to try and recover the time." – **Luciano Benavides**

Dakar organisers have described Stage 8 between Al Duwadimi and Saudi Arabia's capital city Riyadh as "hectic and varied". The leaderboards are now taking shape, but this timed special stage of more than 480 kilometres still has the potential to shake things up. We've been told to expect "a war of physical, mental and mechanical attrition."

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Luciano Benavides © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool



Edgar Canet © Flavien Duhamel/Red Bull Content Pool

Selected Standings after Stage 7

ULTIMATE

1. Henk Lategan (ZAF) / Brett Cummings (ZAF) – Toyota 37:13:08
3. Mattias Ekström (SWE) / Emil Bergkvist (SWE) – Ford +10:25
4. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) / Edouard Boulanger (FRA) – Dacia +21:57
5. Mitch Guthrie Jr. (USA) / Kellon Walch (USA) – Ford +40:01
8. Seth Quintero (USA) / Dennis Zenz (DEU) – Toyota +01:28:32
13. Lucas Moraes (BRA) / Armand Monleon (ESP) – Toyota +03:15:13
14. Rokas Baciūška (LTU) / Oriol Mena (ESP) – Toyota +03:28:42
15. Guillaume De Mévius (BEL) / Mathieu Baumel (FRA) – MINI +03:42:48
43. Cristina Gutiérrez (ESP) / Pablo Moreno (ESP) – Dacia +37:38:39
46. Nani Roma (ESP) / Alex Haro (ESP) – Ford +65:27:09

CHALLENGER

1. Nicolas Cavigliasso (ARG) / Valentina Pertegarini (ARG) – Taurus 40:35:04
2. Gonçalo Guerreiro (POR) / Cadu Sachs (BRA) – Taurus +30:37
4. Pau Navarro (ESP) / Lisandro Sisterna (ARG) – Taurus +01:51:35
5. Corbin Leaverton (USA) / Taye Perry (DEU) – Taurus +03:56:15

SSV

1. Brock Heger (USA) / Max Eddy (USA) – Polaris 41:56:42
3. Francisco López (CHL) / Juan Pablo Latrach (CHL) – CAN-AM +01:56:04

BIKE

1. Daniel Sanders (AUS) – KTM 39:29:22
5. Luciano Benavides (ARG) – KTM +37:32
10. Edgar Canet (ESP) – KTM +01:20:35

QUOTES

Nasser Al-Attiyah: “When you do the roadbook you need to do it properly and check it many, many times. It created a big risk with so many cars all together. It’s something that we need to think about for the future. Everything else was working well for us, the car is good. It’s just the issue with navigation that made things difficult today.”

Mattias Ekström: “There was a problem in the roadbook so we ended up looking like clowns in the circus. That bit wasn’t so fun but afterwards we drove as well as we could. It was quite difficult.”

Mitch Guthrie Jr.: "There was the navigation issue in the middle which kind of messed things up, but it was still a good stage for us. It was kind of a bummer that everyone got grouped up together because we got stuck in dust. It was a pretty messed up stage."

Cristina Gutiérrez: "It was a very difficult stage in terms of navigation. Lots of cars got lost in the same place and then after that we were all in a group. Because of the dust it was difficult to overtake. We also had a puncture, but we were still able to do a very good result."

Lucas Moraes: "Because of the issues we had yesterday we started at the back and this helped us to find our way. I'm happy to get another stage win, for us, for Brazil and for Toyota. It was very important to come back strong after yesterday. If you want to be a champion you have to learn to move on fast and leave things in the past."

Seth Quintero: "Because the stage has been adjusted nobody knows where they've ended up. Unfortunately we got two flats so we really had to back down the pace for the last 80km in the rocks. It was kind of an unfortunate day for us."

Guillaume De Mévius: "It was a tricky stage, but also nice overall. The problem was at 160km when we were opening the road. We got lost together with Nasser. We ended up going back 8km to the previous waypoint. We were searching and then other cars came. It really turned into a mess. In the end we found out that the roadbook was wrong."

Nani Roma: "It was a tough day with one place where everybody was turning. It's now been announced that they will cut this part and that's the fair thing to do. These things can happen when you're racing cross-country."

Toby Price: "Unfortunately we've chosen to withdraw from the Dakar Rally due to medical reasons. Sammy suffered a concussion on Thursday which we kept on the down low because he really wanted to soldier on like the true fighter he is. Today we had an issue with the car that pushed us back into the dust with poor visibility and Sammy took another blow to the head, losing vision and making his concussion worse. I feel it's not fair to keep going because we have so much more to lose than gain. It's a shame to finish like this and we're both gutted. We can fix cars but not humans, and Sam is family to me so his health comes first. We can't thank everyone enough for their support. Hopefully this won't be our last one, time will only tell and thank you all again, it's been a wild ride!"

Giniel de Villiers: "Very sad to announce that our Dakar 2025 campaign is over. Dirk's neck became very sore during Stage 6, and we had to slow right down. He was examined last night, but the medical staff deemed him unfit to continue. This is a sad end to my last Dakar with the team, but I'm just glad that Dirk is OK. Thanks, my friend, for nearly 14 Dakars together. Get well soon!"

Corbin Leaverton: "Again, shoutout to my co-driver Taye (Perry) because we were never lost today. I'm learning that's a good thing at Dakar because you can get lost a lot. I know this is my first Dakar, but man it seems tough. The navigation, the rocks, all of it. So we're happy to get through another day."

Gonçalo Guerreiro: "Unfortunately we had a puncture today but it was completely my fault and my mistake. Apart from that we did a good stage. We're giving everything we have on every stage. I'm happy we could pass the big dunes today because we know there are more coming."

Pau Navarro: "We started in our rhythm and I think we caught up some time to the people in front of us in general classification. Now I'll try and keep this rhythm until the finish and we'll try to fight for the podium in the dunes."

Francisco López: "It was a very fast stage today. I'm happy with how things are going and ready for the five days that we have left to race. I'm focused on the finish line."

Daniel Sanders: "It was a very fast stage and also technical at the start. We had a lot of rain at the beginning of the day so there was a wet line to follow. You just had to be careful not to follow any mistakes. My speed was good, my head was good and my focus was good. It was a much better day compared with yesterday. We're here to win and we're doing everything we can to make that happen."

Luciano Benavides: "Stage 7 was another long stage, but it was also one of the stages I've enjoyed the most this year. In terms of terrain it had a mix of everything. I'm super happy with the bike and with my speed. Unfortunately I did a navigation mistake at 70km and after that I had to push all day to try and recover the time."

Edgar Canet: "I had a problem with my electronic roadbook since the first kilometre. It was beeping all the time. I arrived to the refuelling at 89km by following the lines and then the organisation changed my tablet, but for this I had to wait an hour and a half. From the refuelling the feeling on the bike was great, the navigation and everything. Now I need to have the time returned that I lost because of the tablet."

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