

Al Dhannah, 26th February 2023

FIA-FIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS THE FAVOURITES STEP UP TO THE PLATE

Key points:

- The 7-km long prologue at the gates of the city of Al Dhannah which took place today allowed the ten quickest drivers and riders the opportunity to choose their starting order for stage 1 tomorrow.
- In the car category, **Nasser Al Attiyah** (Toyota Gazoo Racing) achieved the best time ahead of **Guerlain Chicherit** (GCK Motorsports) and **Sébastien Loeb** (Bahrain Raid Xtreme).
- In the bike race, **Monster Energy Honda** riders **Pablo Quintanilla** and **Adrien Van Beveren** prevailed ahead of **Toby Price** (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing).

FIA: AL ATTIYAH TAKES THE UPPER HAND

Three times ADDC winner **Nasser Al Attiyah** set the tone by triumphing with a time of 4'45" on the prologue. **Guerlain Chicherit** posted the 2nd best time, 4" ahead of the other Prodrive Hunter driven by **Sébastien Loeb**, who was in turn 10" behind the Qatari's time.

Yazeed Al Rajhi (Overdrive Racing), thanks to a finish one second behind the Frenchman, is also in the reckoning. In the T3 category, team-mates **Seth Quintero** and **Mitch Guthrie Jr** (Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team USA) completed the prologue in that order and within the same second, in front of **Cristina Gutiérrez** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory), herself just 1 second behind the two men! **Mattias Ekström** (South Racing Can-Am) and **Austin Jones** (Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team USA), the winner on the Dakar, did not get off to the best start, finishing in 8th and 9th place respectively. In the T4 race, the prologue was won by **Rokas Baciūška** (Red Bull Can-Am Factory), world champion in the category.

For the start tomorrow, **Nasser Al Attiyah** has chosen to begin in 10th, **Guerlain Chicherit** 9th, **Sébastien Loeb** 8th and **Yazeed Al Rajhi** 7th. **Cristina Gutiérrez** will be faced with the task of opening the way on tomorrow's special, in front of **Mitch Guthrie** and **Martin Prokop** (Orlen Benzina Team).

FIM: HONDA'S STARS FLEX THEIR MUSCLES

Pablo Quintanilla, who won the ADDC in 2018 and finished 3rd last year, was victorious today with a time of 5'00", ahead of his team-mate **Adrien Van Beveren** (2" behind) and **Toby Price** (5" behind). It was a poor start for **Skyler Howes** (Husqvarna Factory Racing), who could only manage a 10th placed finish. As a result, the American, 3rd on the Dakar, was the last to be able to choose his starting position. In the Rally2 class, **Toni Mulec** (BAS World KTM Racing) beat **Konrad Dąbrowski** (Duust Diverse Racing). **Paolo Lucci** (BAS World KTM Racing) got off to a bad start with a 2-minute penalty after missing a way point. In the Quad race, **Abdulaziz Ahli** tasted victory ahead of **Rodolfo Guillioli**. **Laisvydas Kancius** (AG Dakar School) also received a 2-minute penalty for a missed way point and finds himself in last place in his category.

On completion of the stage 1 starting order choice ceremony, the day's quickest riders gathered as far as possible from having to open the way on the special. **Quintanilla** will start 11th, **VBA** 10th and **Price** 9th. **Mohammed Al Balooshi**, the last rider in the RallyGP class to finish, will open the special, followed by **Skyler Howes** and **"Nacho" Cornejo** (Monster Energy Honda). From the start of the special up to the finishing line, bonuses will be awarded to the first three riders, under the new regulations introduced in 2023 which aim to reward the efforts of the openers.

Tomorrow's programme*

- The Al Dhannah to Qsar Al Sarab stage
- Total distance: 404 km
- A+B link routes: 162 km
- Special: 242 km (start: Ghiyathi / finishing line: near to Tal Mor'eb)
- Starting times for the special:
 - First FIM competitor: 08.00
 - First FIA competitor: 09.40

Follow stage 1 live [HERE](#)

*Local times: 4 hrs before GMT

Start list for stage [here](#)

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