

Heath, Gordon rally in Dakar race

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Santee's Kevin Heath enjoyed his best day in two years in the Dakar Rally and Robby Gordon rebuilt the transmission on his Hummer H3 in time to finish 19th overall in the fifth leg of the 19-stage event.

Heath finished 45th yesterday among the 185 motorcyclists still running to move up to 84th in the event standings among the two- wheel competitors. Teammate James Embro is 64th in the standings.

Heath was forced out of the event on the fourth leg last year in his first Dakar rally.

After finishing third overall Monday in the first African leg of the rally, Gordon was almost forced out of the event with transmission problems Tuesday.

Six times during the 70-mile stage, Gordon and navigator Darren Skilton had to stop and replace a bolt holding the transmission together. Gordon barely made it to the finish area ahead of the disqualification time limit.

Gordon repaired the transmission overnight and returned to the race yesterday. His top -20 finish in the stage boosted him to 45th in the series standings.

"Our chances of winning are gone," said Gordon, who ranked eighth in the series standings after Monday's run. "But we want to continue on."

Three American motorcyclists riding KTMs are making strong showings. Chris Blais is 11th overall after five stages, Jonah Street is 17th and Andy Grider is 22nd. Only 183 of the 239 motorcyclists who started the event are still running at nearly the one-third mark.

The Outdoor Life Network carries daily Dakar reports at 4 p.m.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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