

Media information
08 September 2022

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 Southeast Europe. Day 5.



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Mountains to the Mediterranean.

Recap of Day 5.

Location: Himare, Albania

Weather: Sun, 34°

Course: 210km: Farma Sotira to Himare

Terrain types: Tarmac 130km, mountain trails 80km

Tests: SP1: SENA Motoball Trial, SP2: SUP Water Showdown

Top three male teams:

=1. UK, =1. South Africa, 3. Germany

Top three female teams:

1. Germany, 2. Mexico, 3. South Africa

Himare, Albania. After yesterday's shorter distance course, day five of the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 was the opposite, putting on over 200km as the riders struck a westward route back to the Adriatic sea and a finish at a beach camp near Himare.



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Of course, given the significant physical barrier that is the Pindus mountain range this was no straight forward proposition, as the course searched for a gap in the mountains. In the end it took a combination of following serpentine tarmac roads through gorges and high mountain trails to reach the coast.

This being the GS Trophy there would always be challenges along the way, too. And the first came just 20 minutes after the start as the riders entered the SENA Motoball Trial, where they rode a technical trial section that culminated with a shot at goal with a football. Only instead of striking the ball with their boot, it had to be the rear wheel of their R 1250 GS – so a good test of their brake-slide skills. And much like any Cup Final, for a particular few there was a lot riding on the result – so plenty of nerves.

Back on the day's course, the next job was to break through the Nemercke section of the Pindus mountains – a 2000+ metre tall range of peaks that flatly resist any traveler's attempts to go west. The course did then head up the trails on the lower slopes of these giants, traversing the slopes and a few times requiring determined hill climbing and careful descending. The trails doggedly probed the mountains for weakness. But it wasn't until the Vjose River – one of Albania's greatest water courses – at last cut through the mountains at the village of Dragot that the riders could properly ride westward.

With one mountain range not so much conquered as circumvented, the GS riders were presented with an even grander proposition. The Bence Gorge has only very recently been opened up with a stunning new road that clings bravely to the southern slopes, gaining height via a never-ending succession of hairpin turns. On the other side of the gorge, quite possibly no man can pass as there stands the most impressive 2000m sheer cliff. The drama of the geology was simply breathtaking.

Incredibly at the summit of the climb was not an immediate descent but a plateau, verdant green with grasses and crops, and populated with villages. Quite the surprise, and at last a relaxing ride. At the highest point of the road, the GS riders found an aging concrete monument embellished with a red star, a fascinating relic dating back to Albania's communist past.

But to reach the Adriatic coast there was still no direct road, so again the GS riders took to the mountain trails. These were stunning as always – and punishing, the rocks pounding the BMW R 1250 GS's suspension, while sections of loose 'rolling' stones made several descents a test of technique,



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and nerve. By now many of the GS riders have run several cycles of blistered hands and fingers – painful and distracting – all adding to the growing fatigue.

It was then quite a delight to finish the ride at a beach resort, just south of Himare. Here the riders pitched their tents on the beach, just feet from the water's edge, and of course were sea bathing within minutes!

Just as well they were in their bathers because their second special test was awaiting them. The SUP Water Showdown was definitely the kind of playful fun challenge the riders needed after what had been a hard grind of day on the trails. Tired or not, they threw themselves into the test, and the sea, that is after racing across the beach and swimming a paddle board – with BMW tank bag hopefully safely stowed – out into the sea, rounding a bouy and returning. A bit of fun, and a great way to cool off given the high temperatures.

In the competition, in the male team category, Team South Africa has not only closed the gap to the leaders, but joined them, tied on points with Team UK. With Teams Germany, USA and China 2020 still within striking distance we're setting up for a real showdown over these coming last days. The winning team today was in fact Team USA who dominated both special tests! In the female category, Team Mexico prevailed today, Team Germany having their worst day's results yet, but they still hold the lead going into the final stages.

Tomorrow is the penultimate day of the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022, and it will see the riders head back to the base camp in Kavaje. Only it'll be no downhill cruise, with 250km to cover, 150km of which will be off-road, it's sure to be another test of the GS riders stamina and endurance.

Quotes:

Rihito Funahashi, Team Japan: "Today was a fun day, in some ways easier after the technicality of the last two, but exhausting all the same. Incredible scenery, the gorge was amazing, just beautiful riding. But we were thankful when the last dirt road suddenly dropped us onto the coast and that beautiful clear blue sea. We've really enjoyed our GS Trophy experience. We sadly lost one of our team, Satoshi (Nakazawa), on day two when he broke his collarbone in a fall, but we look forward to reuniting with him when we get back to base camp tomorrow. That has made it hard for us to compete in the competition, but we've really enjoyed being a part of this, and all the experiences."



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Victor Sauge, Team France: “It was a very good day today, the highlight being the very good roads, such as in the gorge, it was a pleasure to ride them. And the scenery was incredible. The off-road was very good as well. Unfortunately, our teammate Cyril (Forget) was taken sick this afternoon, but we hope to have him back again for tomorrow. The GS Trophy has been an amazing, we are really enjoying this beautiful experience.”

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 Southeast Europe. Day 5 overall standings:

Male Teams:

1. United Kingdom 149 points
1. South Africa 149
3. Germany 138
4. USA 127
5. China 2020 125
6. Thailand 116
7. South Korea 109
8. Netherlands 102
9. China 2022 88
10. India 87
11. France 87
12. Brazil 90
13. Latin America 76
14. Mexico 75
15. Japan 65

Female Teams:

1. Germany 212
2. Mexico 197
3. South Africa 192
4. France 175
5. Latin America 168
6. Brazil 119



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In 2021, the BMW Group sold over 2.5 million passenger vehicles and more than 194,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2021 was € 16.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 111.2 billion. As of 31 December 2021, the BMW Group had a workforce of 118,909 employees.

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