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date 17 September 2024

topic BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024, Namibia.

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BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024 Namibia.

Day 3.

Whispers of stone and sand.

Recap of Day 3.

Location: Spitzkoppe, Namibia

Weather: Sunny, 8°C – 29 °C

Course: 156km: Spitzkoppe – Omaruru River - Spitzkoppe

Terrain types: Tarmac 0km, off-road 156km

Tests: SP1: Spitzkoppe INSTA360, SP2: Challenge Camel Thorn Tree

Challenge, SP3: Omaruru METZELER Challenge, SP4: Photo Challenge

Top three teams male:

1. Germany, 2. South Africa, 3. International Team

Top three teams female:

1. International Team, 2. France & Japan

Spitzkoppe. And if these rocks could speak, they would whisper of ancient winds and timeless suns. Of shadows stretching long across the desert's canvas. Like giants frozen in a dance, their granite domes painted in hues of gold and crimson revealing the earth's very bones. Her great ribs of stone, piercing the sky and breathing secrets of a time before time.

This imagery perfectly captured the scene that greeted the riders on the morning of the 3rd day of the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy in Namibia. Bathed in the soft glow of dawn, the rocks stood like an ancient Greek-Roman sculpture—Nature's masterpiece, with layers of stone draped over each other like a blanket. It was a visual feast for the riders, a brief moment of stillness and admiration before

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they tackled the day's first Special Challenge, set right next to the campground.

Day 3, Special Challenge 1: **The Spitzkoppe INSTA360 Challenge.**

Equipped with only a sheet of instructions and a compass, the riders set off on foot to find a hidden GS Trophy wooden board in the rugged terrain around Spitzkoppe. They had five steps to follow, navigating the rocky landscape to reach their target, then take a selfie with the board and return to the starting point—all while racing against the clock. With an Insta360 camera capturing their every move, the riders dashed over rocks and through narrow paths, eyes scanning the terrain for clues. The challenge tested their navigation skills, sense of direction, and quick thinking, all under the pressure of time.

Rider **Scott Acheson (133) of Team USA** mentioned, "This exercise was great! It helped that I grew up without GPS and modern navigation systems. My Marine Corps Training paid off."

After leaving Spitzkoppe, the riders pushed north, winding through farmlands where the scenery seemed almost to shift with each passing moment. Suddenly, as if an invisible line had been drawn in the sand, the fields gave way to the vast, empty expanse of the desert. It was as if someone had declared, "From here, it's farmlands; beyond, only the desert."

Riding through this stark boundary, the riders witnessed the incredible perseverance of nature—several places where, centuries ago, small creeks once meandered, leaving behind a trace of life in the form of sparse vegetation struggling against the arid land. Soon, the riders reached the location for the second Special Challenge of the day.

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Day 3, Special Challenge 2: **The Camel Thorn Tree Challenge**. In this challenge, the riders needed to prove their quick thinking and teamwork by demonstrating how to plug a tire under time pressure. As soon as they left the start line, one rider jumped on their bike and raced over to the disabled motorcycle, while another took off on foot to join them. The third rider grabbed the toolkit and hurried to meet the others. Once all three riders reached the disabled bike, the task was clear: work together to plug the tire as quickly as possible. With hands moving swiftly and focus sharpened, they would patch up the tire, bringing the challenge to a close.

Rider **JP Boer (232) of Team South Africa** said: "We had a very good time. There were no hick-ups, and our tactic was very straightforward: as fast as possible. All of our riders are pretty comfortable with these kinds of challenges."

As the riders continued their journey, they entered the now-dry Omaruru River, one of Namibia's ephemeral rivers, which carved a natural corridor of life through the arid landscape. The dry riverbed stretched before them, lined with ancient Camelthorn and Ana trees that offered shelter and food to desert-adapted wildlife like kudu, oryx, and baboons. Even in its dry state, the Omaruru River told stories of nature's untamed power, its flow capable of surging unexpectedly during the rainy season, reshaping the desert floor with each passing year.

The rocky canyon's terrain became even more challenging. Its walls, painted in every conceivable shade of grey and brown, seemed like a masterpiece etched by time. The path narrowed and widened, sometimes only a few meters across, then opening up to a width of nearly 100 meters. Riding through the deep sand that filled the canyon floor, every twist and turn became a test of skill and concentration.

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With the sun directly overhead, the midday light cast no shadows, flattening the landscape and hiding the road's many dips and ridges, making the ride even trickier. The color variations in the canyon's layered walls hinted at the slow, powerful movements of the Earth's crust, a silent reminder of the planet's ancient and ongoing transformations. However, it was the perfect opportunity for the participants to complete the additional Special Challenge of the day, the Photo Challenge.

Pushing through these challenges, the riders made their way toward the lunch break, a well-deserved rest after a morning of relentless terrain and unforgiving heat.

Only a few kilometers from the lunch break, the riders came across the third special challenge of the day.

Day 3, Special Challenge 3: **The Omaruru METZELER Challenge**. This time, all three riders lined up, ready to tackle the course in relay style. Rider one set off first, navigating through a winding course, circling around the flag, then up and over a rock before making the return trip through the exit gates back to the start. Once back, he high-fived the second rider, who immediately set off to repeat the course. The process continued as the second rider returned to high-five the third rider, who then completed the course. The challenge was all about speed, precision, and teamwork—the clock only stopped once the third rider crossed the finish line and returned to the start.

Rider **Stephan Sleenckx (142) of Team Benelux**, said: "It was very demanding, and the sand was very deep, but it actually went well. I only had one dab, and my team member had one drop, but it went very good. It was a fast challenge but very dusty."

On their way back to the Spitzkoppe Camp, the riders were treated to a breathtaking view of the distant Brandberg Mountain, its outline

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barely visible on the horizon. Known for the ancient White Lady painting found in its caves, Brandberg is a place rich in history and once the site of a mining town that extracted tin from its depths.

The return trail offered a welcome respite from the relentless sand earlier in the day. The hard-packed track, interspersed with rocky sections, provided a smoother ride, allowing the riders to catch their breath and enjoy the changing scenery. The terrain continued to surprise with its diversity; small volcanic rocks appeared on the sides of the track, seemingly placed with purpose, evenly scattered like stones in a Zen Garden.

As they neared their destination, the majestic Spitzkoppe rock formation emerged on the horizon. Towering over the landscape like the tallest building in a quiet village, it beckoned its residents home.

The day ended with the announcement of the results and a teaser video for Day 4 of the GS Trophy, leaving the riders eagerly anticipating the challenges to come.

Quotes:

Rider Dmytro Ivanov (251), International Male Team: "This was an amazing ride on the sand! Perfect conditions, and I love riding in the sand. You don't know what life will bring tomorrow. So, we must live today. And today, I wanted to ride sand!"

Rider Dake Zue (191), Team China: "It was very challenging. We have no issues with sand, but it was a very long sand trail, almost 50 kilometers, and that made things harder for us."

Rider Andrea Gioia (151), Team Italy: "I really enjoyed the sand. My dad, Massimo (Rider 152), is better, and I had to learn from him when I was younger. So I had a great teacher."



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**BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024
Namibia.**

Day Three overall standings:

Male Teams:

1. Germany, 127 points
2. South Africa, 113
3. International Team, 88
4. Brazil, 80
5. India, 75
5. China, 75
7. Benelux, 73
8. France, 70
8. Italy, 70
10. UK, 67
11. South Korea, 64
12. Japan, 58
13. Latin America, 57
14. Mexico, 50
15. Middle East, Africa, 48
16. USA, 29

Female Teams:

1. International Team, 134
2. France, 133
2. Japan, 133
4. Germany, 131
5. South Korea, 126
6. Benelux, 117

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The BMW Group

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In 2023, the BMW Group sold over 2.55 million passenger vehicles and more than 209,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2023 was € 17.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 155.5 billion. As of 31 December 2023, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,950 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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