



Media Information
09 February 2020

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2020 Oceania. Day 1.

Sun and surprises on Day One of the 2020 edition.

Synopsis of Day 1.

Location: Napier Beach, North Island, NZ

Weather: Sun, 15-25°C

Course: 400km: Lakes Lodge, Rotorua to Napier Beach

Terrain types: Highway 215km, gravel 185km

Tests: SP1: 'Water Crossing', SP2: 'Sena Challenge'

Top three teams: 1. South Korea, 2. Italy, 3. USA

Napier Beach, New Zealand. The 2020 BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy enjoyed a spectacular opening stage today as the competitors set off from the thermal springs and Maori homelands in Rotorua to travel through native forest, up onto pastoral high country before descending to Hawke's Bay for a first camp on the trails, overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

The GS Trophy riders were up before dawn, striking camp ahead of a 5:30am breakfast call in preparation for the 7am start – that breakfast being very important with no less than 11 hours of riding ahead. After passing by the first volcano of the tour, the 821m cone of Putauaki (Mt. Edgecumbe), the route took the riders into the native forests of the Huiairau Ranges, where gravel roads followed the river valleys upstream, each turn revealing new natural highlights of the stunning beech forest, which is peppered with native exotics like ponga, toi (mountain cabbage tree) and fuchsia. Beautiful to see, sweet to smell.

After two hours the riders reached the banks of Miniha Stream, a tributary to the Whakatane River, where the arrival of the BMW F 850 GS motorcycles startled a family of Kuni Kuni pigs grazing on the grasses. When the engines quietened the riders could appreciate the sounds of the forest: cicada buzzing their incessant 'zid-zid' while bell birds, tui and fantails added their myriad song.

It was here the riders faced their first test in the 2020 Int. GS Trophy – River Crossing. For each team the three riders needed to ride a trials course that crossed and recrossed the stream before exiting up a steep bank – all three needing to complete the course before a four minute cut-off. The stones and boulders rattled the GS bikes as well as the nerves of the riders, particularly as footing and falls attracted additional penalties – a daunting prospect on this opening day. Falls did indeed come, but so did some spectacular rides, the French notably smooth, fast and efficient.



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After the River Crossing the riders regained the gravel tracks, working their way up to the beautiful Lake Waikaremoana and the impressive Mokau waterfall. Here the GS Trophy riders faced the second test of the day, 'Sena Challenge' where one rider was effectively blindfolded and would be guided by instructions from his teammate – via his Sena 50R mesh intercom bluetooth headset – around a slalom course. A simple act of faith, and a fun test, but it also highlighted the benefits the riders have been enjoying for the first time in the GS Trophy of being able to communicate in real time with their marshals and each other.

The course changed in character immediately after Lake Waikaremoana as the forest gave way to the high country grazing lands that eventually lead down to Hawke's Bay. This region is typified by steep valleys, high cliffs and tenacious sheep! Riding both highway and gravel this made for a most sinuous trail that allowed the riders to enjoy the F 850 GS's agility and punchy 95 horsepower.

The finish came at a camp ground just outside the seaport of Napier, a beautiful city famed for its Art Deco buildings – those buildings being so prominent on account this city was levelled and rebuilt after an earthquake in 1931. The riders could have been mistaken for having survived a seismic event of their own such was their powder-white appearance after enduring Metzeler-created dust trails for most of the day!

Quotes:

Nikki van der Spek, International Female Team 1: "It's been a lot of fun today. The country is amazing, it is so beautiful and it's different all the time. The off-road is mostly gravel, not so hard to ride but you have to be careful of the loose gravel. The tarmac is like a race track, corner after corner – a lot of fun! The first test wasn't easy, my bike fell down and so did that of the second rider so we timed-out. The Sena Challenge revealed that we have a language barrier in our team; we are Dutch, French and Colombian – so three different languages! We'll have to work on that."

Sunao Ueda, Team Japan: "The route today was very good, beautiful if dusty in the gravel. But a great experience and when our marshal took us to the highest point in the ranges the view was huge – magnificent! The tests were good, too, although I laid my bike down in the stream, so not so good for us. What I really enjoyed with the company of Team Italy. With the Sena intercoms we were talking – and laughing – all the way, this is a very nice feature of this GS Trophy."



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Day One overall standings:

- 1 South Korea 65 points
- 2 Italy 53
- 3 USA 50
- 4 Russia 42
- 5 France 41
- 6 South Africa 35
- 7 Argentina 32
- 8 Middle East 32
- 9 Netherlands 30
- 10 Latin America 28
- 11 UK 27
- 12 Nordic 24
- 13 India 21
- 14 Mexico 21
- 15 Thailand 18
- 16 Brazil 17
- 17 Japan 16
- 18 Malaysia 15
- 19 North Africa 15
- 20 Australia 10
- 21 Int. Female Team II 9
- 22 Int. Female Team I 8

The event's excitement will also be relayed with much more information of a more informal kind via BMW Motorrad's social media sources:

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“RIDE AND TALK – The BMW Motorrad Podcast”



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Watch out for more information on the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2020 – brought to you directly from New Zealand!

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