

Media information
10 September 2022

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 Southeast Europe. Day 7.



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South Africa win the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022.

Recap of Day 7.

Location: Kavaje, Albania

Weather: Sun, 35°

Course: 80km around Kavaje

Terrain types: Tarmac 20km, trails 60km

Tests: SP1: Final course (double points exercise),

Top three male teams: (final)

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

Top three female teams (final):

1. South Africa 2. Germany, 3. Mexico

Kavaje, Albania. The BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022 Southeast Europe, the eighth edition, has concluded with a spectacular day's riding in the hills and on the beach near Kavaje. After 1230km of hard adventure riding, and 15 special tests we have our winners, and it's Team South Africa who has done a double – winning both the male and female team competitions.



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Today's course was the shortest of the event, but arguably the sweetest. Sportive Directors Chris Zimmermann and Tom Weinmayr put together a highly technical loop using some of the best trails in the locality. Designed to give the GS riders one last test of their trail skills, it included a succession of fantastic hill climbs and descents on tracks that challenged the riders with a labyrinth of super-deep rain channels, ruts, steps and cambers. Between the hills came a succession of river crossings. The water level might have been low, but the banks and rocky riverbeds were still a challenge. Highly technical and hard work, in all instances you had to select your line and commit, again and again. And if you made a mistake, then it was just as well the temperature was a good eight degrees lower than yesterday, and the humidity a little more bearable, for the recovery was never easy. It was terrific riding, great fun, and again revealing of just how strong an all-rounder the BMW R 1250 GS is – and how dependable, there's nothing, it seems, that it can't do!

Once back at base camp it was time to prepare for the afternoon's super test – the final throw of the dice in this year's GS Trophy. Running along the length of the beach this was a fully taped course that was part enduro, part trial. The riders started from the bike compound and initially had to fight their way through a series of zig-zags between the trees on the shoreline – in deep sand. Then followed a blast up and down the beach itself, first on the sand, then over sea-weathered rocks where the waterline had narrowed the course to barely a bike width. Super-tricky, and as a few riders found, one mistake here and you were in the water – fortunately not more than knee deep! The test concluded with a super-tight 'garage' section under a pergola where the riders needed to execute repeated full lock turns on sand and over more rocks, before hopping down onto the beach again for another blast in the deep sand before returning to the bike compound.

That's a long description, but often so was the time taken by the teams as the sand and rocks conspired to trip the riders at every opportunity. The women teams rode the super test first and possibly had the harder time of it as they wore-in the lines. The heat and humidity on the beach were high, too – it was double-hard going, yet all the female teams completed the course. Here, the surprise of the day, for the onlookers, was when Team South Africa's diminutive Christelle Van Der Meulen having buried her R 1250 GS in a deep rut somehow singlehandedly lifted the rear wheel clean out unaided – that's a good 200 kilos! Clearly, it's not just the South African males that have superhuman strength!



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Christelle's effort proved pivotal as the South African's made the best run of the female teams, ahead of Germany and Latin America. In the male teams, front-runners Team South Africa put in a solid, conservative ride to place third, leaving the door open for Latin America to take the full haul of double points, ahead of Mexico. Significantly, South Africa's nearest challengers, Teams UK and Germany placed fourth and fifth respectively.

Today was also the day the results came in for the photo and video challenges. During the week, the teams were challenged to submit their most creative photo and one-minute video based on their week of adventure. These were voted on both by the public and the teams themselves. Team Japan revealed a creative streak exceeding all others in the male competition, while Team Germany had the run on the female competitors.

When the scores were tallied up, for the fourth consecutive GS Trophy it was Team South Africa on top. In the male competition, they had made a steady start to the week's competition but got stronger as the week went on. Physically and mentally strong, and so well-practiced both individually and as a team, it's clear that if any other nation wants to get a taste of GS Trophy victory, then they'll have to significantly up their preparation. Team UK came closest to unsettling the South Africans but readily and respectfully conceded they'd been beaten by the better team. Team Germany took a well-earned third place.

The female teams competition couldn't have finished any closer, just the one point separating Team South Africa from runner-up Germany. With teams receiving points deductions for bike damages such as broken indicators and lever replacements, both teams had been nervously adding up their gains and losses, but it fell to South Africa to win the first female GS Trophy competition and secure the double.

Warren Ventner, Team South Africa: "This is amazing, we didn't expect this, last night we were doing the numbers and we knew it wasn't a certain thing. It came down to the last challenge. So we are really stoked. And to take the fourth win is great, there was that pressure not to be 'that' team – the one's who didn't win – but we said to ourselves we'll do the best we can and whatever comes up, comes up. Also, we want to thank everyone who's supported us back at home, they really help make this happen."



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Hanneli Zondagh, Female Team South Africa: “It’s unbelievable. We were only leading Germany by one point yesterday and we didn’t have the best last stage so until the result was announced we didn’t know which way it had gone, but somehow we still kept that one point advantage, I feel truly blessed. It just shows what teamwork can do if you just don’t give up. It’s been a great competition, we’ve really enjoyed our times with the other female teams, they’ve been incredible, and so much fun. And what a great thing to do; once women have been exposed to this great sport and pastime of adventure motorcycling they see how fantastic it is, how liberating, that you ride, you see the world, you meet new people, see different places, even in your own country. It’s a wonderful thing.”

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2022

Southeast Europe.

Final standings:

Male Teams:

1. South Africa 217 points
2. United Kingdom 204
3. Germany 185
4. China 2020 169
5. USA 165
6. Netherlands 155
7. Thailand 146
8. South Korea 142
9. Latin America 141
10. Mexico 139
11. France 133
12. India 120
13. China 2022 113
14. Brazil 100
15. Japan 88

Female Teams:

1. South Africa 297
2. Germany 296
3. Mexico 264
4. France 241



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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.

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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