

Press release

date 18 September 2024

topic BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024, Namibia.

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BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024 Namibia.

Day 4.

From the desert to the deep blue.

Recap of Day 4.

Location: Swakopmund, Namibia

Weather: Sunny, 12°C - 32°C

Course: 224km: Spitzkoppe – Kleine Spitzkoppe – Khan River – Swakopmund

Terrain types: Tarmac 24km, off-road 200km

Tests: SP1: ADVANTEC Pull Challenge, SP2: Rooi Tafel Trial

Top three teams male:

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

Top three teams female:

1. France, 2. Germany, 3. Japan

Swakopmund. The ocean rose like a mirage on the horizon. The cold, salty breeze from the Atlantic washed away the dust of the dunes, a welcome reprieve after the unforgiving heat. Here, where the vastness of the Namib Desert meets the endless stretch of ocean, it felt as though we had arrived in a new world—one where sand and sea dance together in perfect contrast, a place where the desert surrenders to the deep blues of the coast.

The riders awoke to a mild morning, but the tranquility wouldn't last. The day ahead promised both adventure and challenges as they prepared to leave camp.

Shortly after setting off, the route guided them around the rugged beauty of Kleine Spitzkoppe, the smaller sibling of the iconic Spitzkoppe formation. By now, the riders had become familiar with

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Namibia's ever-changing landscape. If there were one word to describe the terrain, it would be "unpredictable" — a land where every twist and turn offered a new challenge.

After skirting the edges of Kleine Spitzkoppe, through the sweeping expanse of the national park, the riders arrived at the site of their first special challenge of the day. The warm-up was over, and the real test was about to begin.

Day 4, Special Challenge 1: **The ADVANTEC Pull Challenge.**

Emulating every rider's nightmare—a motorcycle that has run out of gas—this challenge added a tough layer of complexity. The task seemed simple enough: cover 50 meters, but those 50 meters were buried under deep, unforgiving sand.

At the start, the three riders lined up. The first rider set off quickly, racing through the sand towards the finish line. But as they tore ahead, the real challenge began for the second rider. While battling through the cloud of dust and sand kicked up by the first, the second rider had to attach a towing rope to the third motorcycle and pull it through the sand to the finish.

As the second rider fought to maintain traction and pull the towed bike forward, the first rider had already arrived at the finish, grabbing a gas can to simulate refueling the third bike. It was a test of coordination, strength, and strategy—made all the more difficult by the sandy conditions and the relentless dust cloud left behind by the first rider's departure.

Rider **Taher Altayed (243) of Team Middle East**, said: "Super nice special challenge. We had to coordinate with each other and make sure that everybody knew what to do. The plan was very simple. I would ride my bike to the gas can while my teammates would tow the disabled bike. Easy!"

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The riders completed the loop around Kleine Spitzkoppe, a trail that offered a bit of everything. The mostly hardpacked dirt, loose gravel, and rocky terrain kept them focused, while the few dried creek crossings with their sandy beds added just enough unpredictability to keep everyone on their toes.

As they pushed westward, the road led through small communities, where local residents stood by their handmade roadside stands, waving at the passing riders. The sight of the convoy of motorcycles and support vehicles was a spectacle for the local children, their eyes wide with excitement. Who knows what thoughts ran through their minds—maybe one of them dreamed of becoming a future GS rider, traversing distant lands and taking part in something as grand as the GS Trophy.

The road from the first special challenge to the lunch break location was manageable, even for the least experienced riders. By now, everyone had found their rhythm, tackling the sand and loose gravel with confidence. Even the steep, rocky uphill didn't pose the challenge they once did. On their way, the riders passed through an abandoned marble mine, with massive marble blocks scattered across the landscape—a reminder of a once-thriving area that had long since faded away.

After a quick but much-needed lunch break, the riders prepared to enter the Khan River Canyon, for a rugged 80-kilometer stretch of terrain that would test their skills and endurance. Plunging into the heart of the canyon, they found themselves surrounded by towering rock walls that rose sharply on either side, their jagged edges casting long shadows across the trail. It was a surreal landscape—majestic, yet unforgiving—signaling the approach of their second and final special challenge of the day.

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The path narrowed as it snaked between the rock formations, forcing the riders to navigate the tight passes carefully. At times, the towering cliffs seemed to close in on them, and the road was a thin thread carved through eons of erosion. The smooth canyon floor gave way to rough patches of loose gravel, with large boulders strewn along the sides, reminding them of nature's power to both create and destroy.

With every twist and turn, the canyon revealed a new wonder—massive rock formations that looked as though they had been sculpted by hand, their colors shifting from deep reds to light browns under the changing light. Riding through these towering rock faces, it felt as if the earth itself had split open, creating a natural passageway just for them.

At certain points, the track widened and narrowed unpredictably, requiring the riders to maintain a careful balance of precision and speed as they navigated through the rugged terrain. The towering rocks and winding paths gave the feeling of riding through a labyrinth carved by time, with each bend offering a new, breathtaking view of the canyon's dramatic landscape.

The constant shifting of the road surface—from hard-packed dirt to loose rocks to deep sand—kept everyone focused, and the echo of the motorcycles reverberating off the canyon walls only added to the sense of isolation and adventure.

As the canyon finally opened up, the riders knew they were emerging from one of the most dramatic and challenging stretches of the day—a place where the raw beauty of Namibia's terrain had left its mark on both them and their bikes. But there was little time to rest; at the canyon's exit, the second special challenge awaited, ready to test their endurance once again.

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Day 4, Special Challenge 2: **Rooi Tafel Trial**. Set against the surreal backdrop of towering rock formations, the Rooi Tafel Trial demanded both precision and grit. The three riders began in the start box, with rider one setting off as the clock started. The course was a tough trial section featuring sharp turns, deep sand, and challenging rock climbs. Upon reaching the finish line, rider one would raise their hand, signaling for rider two to start, followed by rider three. Points were deducted for dabs, going out of bounds, or dropping the bike. The riders had to work quickly but carefully, with all three needing to complete the course within a 5-minute limit.

Rider **Martin Ulreich (252) of the International Male Team**, said:

"This section was very small and very tight. You must ride very slowly and carefully, and because it was so technical, we couldn't do it without putting our feet down. We didn't drop a bike, so we hope our time was good."

Among the adrenaline and tough competition, there was a heartwarming moment that truly captured the GS spirit. The riders from Team India, along with their MRP, took a pause to embrace one another in a heartfelt group hug. Grateful for the rare opportunity to be together in Namibia, competing in the GS Trophy, it was a touching reminder of what this event is all about—camaraderie, teamwork, and the bonds that form through shared adventure. It was a genuine demonstration of the GS team spirit, showing that beyond the challenges, the experience of being here together meant everything.

As the riders emerged from the canyon, the landscape shifted once again. The rocks became sharper and more defined, as if hardened by time, standing tall with a wisdom that seemed ancient and untouchable—as if this was the birthplace of Africa. The journey westward brought not only a change in scenery but a change in the

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air. The temperature dropped quickly as the cold ocean breeze swept in, a refreshing contrast to the desert heat they had endured all day.

When they finally entered Swakopmund, it felt like stepping into a different world. The stark desert gave way to the lively, touristic atmosphere of the coastal town. New houses lined the oceanfront, markets bustled with energy, and the streets buzzed with life. It was as though they had left Namibia behind and crossed into a completely new country.

The day came to a close with dinner by the ocean, the sound of the waves a soothing backdrop to the evening's festivities. As the scores for the day were announced, the riders celebrated with laughter and camaraderie, all while preparing for the challenges of the next day—the longest of the GS Trophy, Day 5.

Quotes:

Rider Tomas Harrison (122), Team Latin America: "The day was spectacular. The canyon was such a treat. Similar to what we did yesterday, but this one was very narrow, beautiful rocks, such a great experience. We were riding in the middle of very tall rock formations, and a lot of trees, which was rare if you think we're in the desert. We were riding with team UK and we really bonded. It was such a beautiful ride."

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Day Four overall standings:

Male Teams:

1. Germany, 155 points
2. South Africa, 150
3. International Team, 101
4. Brazil, 98
5. France, 95
6. Benelux, 93



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- 7. Italy, 89
- 8. Latin America, 87
- 9. South Korea, 85
- 10. India, 82
- 11. UK, 81
- 11. China, 81
- 13. Mexico, 78
- 14. Middle East, Africa, 63
- 14. Japan, 63
- 16. USA, 49

Female Teams:

- 1. France, 172
- 2. Germany, 168
- 3. Japan, 167
- 4. International Team, 166
- 5. South Korea, 160

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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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