



Press release
November 18, 2010

BMW Motorrad GS Trophy 2010, day 6. Elephants halt the GS Trophy, temporarily.

Pongola Game Reserve, South Africa. Without question, with four special tests concluded this was an intense day's competition in the GS Trophy. As the competition runs into its final throes, the teams rode 160 kilometres, nearly all on gravel or mud tracks, from the Phinda Game Reserve westwards to the Pongola Game Reserve on what is now the return leg to Johannesburg. At the day's conclusion, despite swinging fortunes, the top of the results table looks almost unchanged, with Team UK still leading, but Team South Africa now slightly edging Team Nordic for the runner-up spot.

However, the GS Trophy ground to a halt after barely 10 kilometres today when elephants on the Phinda Game Reserve took possession of the exit track. Concealed by trees they were a surprise to the first team of the day who had to beat a hasty escape before a bull elephant. Understandably looking to protect its herd, the bull then guarded the track against the oncoming GS Trophy competitors for the next half hour before leading his herd away.

Following the unplanned elephant encounter the teams faced their first special test of the day, swapping the rear wheels in two F 800 GSs by the roadside. Team Japan were the first to go into this test and stunned all onlookers with an impressive time that would only be bettered by Team South Africa, Team Italy and Team Alps, who finished in that order.

The second special test located in the Pongola Game Reserve saw the teams take turns at riding a small course where they had to collect a spear (while in motion, feet up) then ride and throw the spear at a target. Requiring balance and coordination, Team Alps showed they had both in abundance to score their first win of the competition.

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The final special test of the day saw the teams paddle canoes on a return crossing of the lake situated in the centre of the reserve. Being the home to both crocodiles and hippopotami, there were perhaps unseen dangers in this test, but fortunately the wildlife were not in the mood for dining. The burly Team Nordic members again displayed their physical superiority to win, while Team America – possibly half the weight of the Vikings – used good technique to bag the runner-up.

The second photo competition (scored based on a public vote via www.gstrophy.com) was decided in favour of South Africa over Team UK – showing there's equal support at home to the efforts coming from these teams in the field.

So the day win fell to Team Alps with a consistent 3-1-3-6 scorecard over the four tests, enough to boost their overall position to fifth. Team Alps were a clear nine points ahead of runners-up Team Nordic followed by Team UK, who remain in the lead of the GS Trophy overall with 114 points, just four points clear of Team South Africa who hold a two-point advantage over Team Nordic.

1st, Day Five: Team Alps

Christophe Muri: This was a good day for Team Alps, in all three special tests we made good results. We took a planned approach to the tasks today, used our brains and stayed cool to get the job done. It's good to find the results at last. We have young Bernhard (Schmidtmayr, 23) in our team, he's a good rider but our other two are a bit slower on the bike, so for him I think it's especially nice to get the good result he's hungered for.

ST7: Wheel change: 1, South Africa; 2, Team Italy; 3, Team Alps

ST8: Assagai (spear throwing): 1, Team Alps; 2, Team UK; 3, Team Italy

ST9: Canoeing: 1, Team Nordic; 2, Team USA; 3, Team Alps

Photo competition: 1, Team South Africa; 2, Team UK; 3, Team Canada





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Other highlights:

Team Japan – bringing the house down

Having been dealt with two injuries over the past two days there's been no question that Team Japan has suffered bad luck. However, this morning Shigechika Aikawa was given the all-clear by the GS Trophy medic and so returned to the competition just in time to lift the team to their best result yet. Fourth in the wheel changing, they received a standing ovation in the evening results ceremony – reflecting the sympathies the rest of the teams felt for the beleaguered Japanese.

Tohru Tamiya, team journalist: We're very happy to get this result. With Yoshio (Nakai) and Shigechika injured yesterday the team feeling has been very bad. What helped us in the wheel changing was we saw some building blocks nearby and we used these to stand the bikes on and this meant all three of us could work on the bikes, not having to have one man hold the bike and only two working. And we set out who should do what beforehand, we knew what we had to do.

Team Italy take an early bath

Looking set to have their strongest day yet after placing second and third in the first two tests today, Team Italy lost their chance of a day win when Marco De Muri and Daniele Fontani capsized their canoe in the final test, not once but twice, requiring a safety boat rescue.

Marco De Muri: Me and Daniele we got in a bit hot (off the pontoon) and the boat threw us to the crocodiles! One time was not enough and the boat clearly felt like throwing us in a second time, which it did! The day for us was otherwise very good – we got to ride in very beautiful country and we did well in the first two tests.





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Overall standings after six days:

1. UK	114pts
2. South Africa	110
3. Nordic	108
4. Canada	99
5. Alps	88
6. Spain	85
7. Germany	80
8. USA	78
9. Italy	67
10. Japan	45