



Media Information
28 February 2020

BMW MOTORRAD INTERNATIONAL GS TROPHY OCEANIA 2020: A retrospective

Munich. The seventh BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy, the 2020 Oceania edition, came to a close on February 16. After eight grueling days, and over 2500km travelled over both the North and South islands of New Zealand, Team South Africa emerged victorious in this most iconic of adventure motorcycling competitions – for the third consecutive occasion.

Some 22 international teams, with participants from over 40 countries, took on the challenge of the latest edition of this unique competition. Riding in the Southern Hemisphere summer, the riders mostly enjoyed comfortable temperate conditions, but more than once they also experienced the unique Kiwi phenomenon of 'four seasons in one day' as overnight temperatures plummeted and the riders found rain and winds as they tackled the trails. The GS riders also found themselves everywhere from sea level – on the North Island beaches – to thousands of feet up alpine passes in the South Island.

The days were typically long with breakfast calls at 5:30 and up to 12-hours of riding. On the occasion of crossing the Cook Strait to reach the South Island the start was an even earlier 3:30; in all the riders became very familiar with eating breakfast by the light of their head torches.

Once on the trails, the riders experienced every terrain New Zealand could offer, from sandy beaches, to gravel tracks, to rocky passes and a good number of river crossings. Their adventure riding skills and their endurance were most certainly tested.

This year's Int. GS Trophy motorcycle was the new F 850 GS, which more than proved itself as being up to the rugged task. It was also a delight to ride, with so many of the riders expressing satisfaction in the bike's versatility and performance, while proving fun to ride both on highway and on the trails.

Team South Africa's 'threepeat'

The Oceania 2020 edition will be recorded in Int. GS Trophy history as one of the closest competitions (although it's hard to go past the one-point win the UK recorded over the South Africans in 2010). Going into the eighth and final day there were three teams in close contention for the win, with less than 10 points splitting them: South Africa, Italy and France. And after the first test of the day – when the South Africans suffered an uncharacteristic fall – the competition hung on the outcome of the final parcour test. Only then Team South Africa rallied impressively, putting in three almost immaculate rides, while the need to attack saw Team France and Team Italy made some mistakes.

And so Team South Africa took their third GS Trophy win 'on the bounce'. That's wins in the South East Asia, Central Asia and now Oceania editions –



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which they can add to runner-up positions in the 2014 North America and 2010 South Africa editions, marking them out as by far the most successful nation in the history of the event.

However, it must be said the South Africans did not dominate this edition. For the first three days the hard-riding – and it has to be said, fun loving – Team South Korea headed the leader board, only handing over the lead to Team France on day four. The South Africans were always in contention though, and from day five to the end they headed the leader board, but only by the slimmest margins as Teams France and Italy proved tenacious in their pursuit.

Team Netherlands – three tall, powerful figures – proved impressive in their debut in the competition. Placed ninth after day one, they improved daily and in fact were top scorers on the final day to lift themselves to fourth overall, just five points off the podium. Other debutants didn't fare so well. Team North Africa were down a man after one of their number sustained a fracture to his foot after crashing on day two. They finished 21st. Team Middle East placed mid-pack in 11th and Team Malaysia 18th.

Team India, debutants and last place finishers in 2018, improved by three places this year, finishing 19th – keeping to their vow to improve with each edition, although at this rate it may take a fair few editions before they reach their second target of challenging Team South Africa for the win!

The International Female Teams did not score the successes they desired. But they rode strong and scored highly on occasional tests. Their high point came on the marathon 440km day six, when the two female teams, riding together, both started and finished the day at the head of the pack. Bearing in mind this day also included an arduous 110km technical off-road section through the Mackenzie high country – with a fair few deep-water crossings – this was an impressive display of both technical riding and endurance.

In the end it was Team South Africa's year, again. Solid preparation, excellent teamwork – paired with a great sense of international camaraderie and a fun attitude – saw them prevail.

Brandon Grimsted: "We had a fun week, we thoroughly enjoyed it and honestly it was some of the best off-road riding I've done in my life. Holding just a five point lead into the final day was scary and we were nervous, over-thinking everything, and that led to problems in the penultimate test, but we got back up and for the parcour final we set a fast time with super-clean riding and that won it for us.

"As a team we were already close, but the week of being in each other's company all the hours of every day has bonded us for life! And the friends we've made along the way, from all these different nations – well, it makes the experience complete."



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The BMW F 850 GS

After three editions with the boxer twin R 1200 GS, this year was a return to the parallel twin GS, now updated to the F 850 GS as launched a year ago. The new bike brings with it the tough build of its predecessor, the F 800 GS, but is brought up to date with all the latest rider aids for a thoroughly modern adventure ride. The bike performed well with its agility both on and off-road.

Tim Mitchell, Team UK: "I normally ride an R 1200 GS, so riding the F 850 GS was a new experience for me – and a good one, I enjoyed the new rider aids and things like the new TFT screen which packs so much information and yet reads so naturally. And I enjoyed riding it, too, it handles so well both on the twisty highways as well as on the trails."

Ronnie Lundberg, Team Nordic: "I love this bike! I love the suspension, the power, the way it is so narrow. I found it to be great both on the gravel and the road, across everything, and that's what GS is all about, it's an everything-you-want bike. So good!"

Tony Aldana, Team Mexico: "This is a beautiful bike, it does everything. I don't know how to say it; it is everything that I need. I've been thinking about a 1200, but from this test, these eight days, I now think I love this bike more! You can go fast, go off-road, go through rivers, you can do anything with this bike. And the technology it has is great, the traction control and the enduro pro mode are amazing. You can go with this bike anywhere you want to in the world!"

The Int. GS Trophy In their words

Diego Penagos, Team Latin America: "To be honest it feels really bad for this adventure to be coming to an end. This community, these friendships, we've met people from all over the world, made so many friends, it's been wonderful – but now we must go home! On one hand we're super-happy for the experience, but we're going to miss all this and these people so much. I'll even miss my teammates as they don't live in Colombia. I'm going to miss everyone so much!"

Rickiey Naik, Team India: "This has been very, very exciting, sometimes challenging. The views, the terrain, the overall experience has been phenomenal, in fact I'm running out of words to describe it. It's like they say, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. The whole bunch of people, the marshals, the organisation – it has all been amazing."

Soufiane Ammar, Team North Africa: "I came into this event as the media guy but I became a proper team member after we lost our leader on the morning of day two. But we never gave up and we had a beautiful week, enjoying beautiful



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landscapes, making great relationships, and we now have so many friends from around the world. So we are happy to have made the finish, it's been difficult but we are here and very happy to have made it. And next time hopefully our team will do better. Make life a ride!"

Aurelien Szulek, Team France: "Wow, every day was amazing, the relationships with the people were great, the roads, the landscapes... and the bike was really good, I didn't expect it to be so good. It feels good on the road and trails. So we want to say a big thank you to BMW Motorrad, for creating the GS, because with this bike they opened the road to so many possibilities. It's the best adventure bike in the world and BMW Motorrad is the only brand that can give an experience like we've enjoyed this week."

Nikki van den Spek, International Female Team I: "The week has been amazing. We had a language barrier in our team – we are Colombian, French, Austrian and Dutch – but we overcame this and together had a great experience, and now we know each other so well. For the girls, sometimes it was hard, but in the end they managed the bike very well and it wasn't a big problem. When we rode with the male teams you could see in the morning the men were thinking 'hmm, we have to ride the whole day with the female team?!' But after a short while everything was okay and they'd say, 'hey, you are great riders, we'll have fun today!' It's sad the event is now over."

Tony Aldana, Team Mexico: "This week has been everything, but more than everything, an adventure! There has been river crossings, sandy beaches, gravel, rocky trails – everything that I love about motorcycling. New Zealand has everything, mountains, lakes – it's a beautiful country. In all this was a beautiful once-in-a-lifetime experience, I loved it. There was not a day I would say was the best, the perfect one – the whole event was perfect!"

Mathias Horn, Project Manager, BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy

"The 2020 BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy has been the biggest yet. The most participants, the longest distance and, well, two islands! So it's been a challenge, the logistics have been immense, particularly as we're down here in one of the remotest locations on the planet. But as always our team has come together and the event has run exactly to plan.

"I'm delighted that the event has met, if not exceeded, the expectations of the participants. The GS is not just a motorcycle, it's about connecting with the world, about a community, a shared passion, and so this event has so much to live up to. The participants have come to experience so much and for the F 850 GS to deliver on that, to have won over their hearts – and being a new model for many this was their first experience with it – has been a success in itself.



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“In all it’s been something of a life-affirming experience for the participants, but also for us as organisers – every day we got to share in the joy. Lastly, I’d like to express sincerest thanks to our sponsors, each bring so much to the event and to have representatives from each here with us, riding the course with the participants, seeing their products in action, that’s special too.”

Amelie Diehl-Thiele, Project Manager, BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy

“It’s a delight to bring the people of the world together, to see new teams from North Africa and the Middle East as well as increased participation from the countries of Asia. That the GS can unify people from 40 nations, bring them together, to share the ride, the joy and laughter, is an outcome of the event that goes far beyond corporate talk of brand or market awareness.”

“As well, I think our course directors, Chris and Tom, plotted a route through New Zealand that showed off this incredible environment to its best, while ensuring we left but the lightest of footprints. We showed that adventure motorcycling can reach the wilderness but also respect it.

“And we’re grateful to the people of New Zealand for having welcomed us so warmly, while I’ve been proud of our GS riders who have behaved as the most exemplary of ambassadors for adventure motorcycling and the GS motorcycle.

“So to all the GS riders out there around the world, we invite you to join the GS Trophy community and, who knows, in a couple of years you too could be participating in the international final, enjoying the ride of your life!”

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2020 Oceania.

Final standings:

- 1 South Africa 394
- 2 France 382
- 3 Italy 380
- 4 Netherlands 375
- 5 South Korea 361
- 6 Latin America 355
- 7 Brazil 335
- 8 Russia 316
- 9 Mexico 295
- 10 Argentina 278
- 11 Middle East 268
- 12 Australia 264
- 13 USA 254

BMW Motorrad

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14 Nordic 246
15 UK 238
16 Thailand 222
17 Japan 218
18 Malaysia 208
19 India 200
20 Int. Female Team I 169
21 North Africa 146
22 Int. Female Team II 118

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

BMW Motorrad Facebook www.facebook.com/bmwmotorrad

Twitter www.twitter.com/bmwmotorrad (#gstrophy)

YouTube www.youtube.com/bmwmotorrad

Instagram www.instagram.com/bmwmotorrad

“RIDE AND TALK – The BMW Motorrad Podcast”

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2019, the BMW Group sold over 2,520,000 passenger vehicles and more than 175,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2018 was € 9.815 billion on revenues amounting to € 97.480 billion. As of 31 December 2018, the BMW Group had a workforce of 134,682 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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