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date 16 September 2024

topic BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024, Namibia.

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## **BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024 Namibia.** **Day 2. Into the heart of Namibia.**

### **Recap of Day 2.**

Location: Spitzkoppe, Namibia

Weather: Sunny, 12°C – 29 °C

Course: 184km: Ai Aiba – Schwarze Spitzkoppe – Spitzkoppe

Terrain types: Tarmac 0km, off-road 184km

Tests: SP1: Flying Boxer, SP2: The SENA Rock Challenge

Top three teams male: 1. South Africa, 2. Germany, 3. International Team

Top three teams female: 1. Germany, Japan, 3. Benelux

**Spitzkoppe.** There's something magical about waking up in Namibia, even more so when it's under the roar of lions, ready for battle - or at least, that's what it felt like listening to the nearly 80 boxer engines revving up as they emerged from the valley where the campground lay, signaling the start of the day.

Day 2 began with a loop on the premises of Ai Aiba, a lodge that spans over 5,000 hectares and is part of a game reserve. As the riders made their way through this vast and impressive reserve, they encountered various animals, including giraffes, and more, creating what felt like a true safari on GS motorcycles.

The ride proved to be extremely technical, presenting the most challenging trails encountered so far, all set against the backdrop of magnificent granite hills towering beside the road. However, whether the riders had time to enjoy the views was another matter entirely. Along the deep sandy trails, the true spirit of GS shined brightly, as riders leaped off their bikes to assist others without a second

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thought. This spirit of camaraderie is what the GS Trophy is all about. But to make matters more challenging, the absence of wind created extremely dusty conditions.

Namibia's diverse terrain revealed itself just a few kilometers from the campsite. After navigating the technical ride, still surrounded by sand, the competitors suddenly found themselves on a massive granite rock the size of a small village, where the first special challenge of the day awaited. The solid ground provided a much-needed break for the riders.

Day 2, Special Challenge 1: **The Flying Boxer**. In this trial, the riders had to demonstrate their ability to pull their motorcycles from one ledge to another, simulating a real-world scenario like a fallen bridge over a canyon. A motorcycle hung mid-air, attached to a rope anchored to sturdy objects. The riders needed to sprint to the opposite end, grab two ropes, secure them to the bike, and pull it from one edge to the other, creating an incredible spectacle.

Rider **Sunghee Kim (301) of Female Team South Korea** shared, "After seeing the exercise, we decided to pull the bike with our weight. We have enough confidence that we can use our power and weight. We will also try to stand on a flat surface." After a successful attempt, she added, "The technique we were practicing worked. We went straight for the flat part of the ledge and pulled from there. That helped a lot and we were able to complete the challenge."

On the way to the second Special Challenge, the riders often wondered if there was even an actual trail. Thanks to the guidance of their appointed Marshals, they arrived safely at the location for the second part of the day. Navigating through thick bushland and deep sand, the competitors continued around Ai Aiba, even crossing what seemed to be an airstrip - a long, straight stretch of hard-packed dirt that could easily be mistaken for a road. If it weren't for the

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helicopter supporting the medical team, one might not realize it was used as a landing strip.

Again, the competitors found themselves riding on a massive granite rock, and after tackling a very steep uphill climb, which was no problem for the R 1300 GS bikes, they arrived at the location for the second special challenge of the day.

Day 2, Special Challenge 2: **The SENA Rock Challenge**. In this challenge, competitors had to complete a lap around a large granite rock and follow a bicycle trail back to the starting line. Each rider completed the loop, with the first rider setting a reference time for the remaining two riders (or one for the female teams). The closer the three riders crossed the finish line, the higher their score. While no timing devices were allowed, riders could use their BMW Communicator Systems to time their laps.

Rider **Steven Ferguson (162) of Team UK** explained the team's tactic: "About this challenge, the riding part was the easiest. We had one rider counting the times of all three to try and be as similar as possible, and I had the easy job to go first, and my time was the time the other two had to match. I think we got pretty close."

The morning concluded by closing the loop around the Ai Aiba lodge, where the riders returned for lunch before beginning the final part of their journey, heading further west towards the Spitzkoppe Lodge.

**Riding into the heart of Namibia.** With their energy restored, the riders pushed on towards Spitzkoppe, also known as the "Matterhorn of Namibia." This iconic group of granite peaks rises dramatically from the flat desert floor, creating a striking landmark visible from many kilometers away. The route from Ai Aiba to Spitzkoppe was entirely off-road, featuring sandy tracks, rocky outcrops, and dry riverbeds that provided a variety of challenges.

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Upon reaching Spitzkoppe Camp, riders had the opportunity to refuel their bikes and take in the breathtaking scenery of the surrounding area. Spitzkoppe is not only a geological marvel but also a cultural treasure, with numerous rock art sites hidden among its caves and overhangs.

**The Road to Namibia conclusion.** Three BMW R 1300 GS Adventure bikes began a journey from Germany, carrying the Trophies to Namibia. What better way to transport the coveted prize than on the perfect Adventure motorcycle? **Nikki van der Spek**, one of the riders, shared, "It was an amazing journey, with the highlight of it being the sighting of wildlife. We rode 20 meters away from rhinos, we got to see giraffes, a lot of elephants, and even lions!" When asked about the motorcycle, **Vasco Santos** added, "It is really impressive. If I could only use one word, it would be 'comfort,' especially during the extremely long riding days in Europe. We could barely realize we were on a motorcycle. The Automated Shift Assistant option had zero problems. While on the dirt, I was skeptical about it, I found out it added another layer of comfort."

The day concluded with a sense of accomplishment as riders settled in for the night under a full moon, surrounded by one of Namibia's most iconic landscapes.

**Quotes:**

**Rider Fernando Dias (103) of Team Brazil:** "I really liked this day. I prefer riding this terrain. It was not so hard for me. Team Brazil did really well today and we're very satisfied."

**Rider Francisco Leyva (112) of Team Mexico:** "It was an amazing day. It started a little bit rough with the deep sand, but as the day progressed, we felt better and better with every kilometer. We kept a nice pace, and we had a great time."



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**BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024, Namibia.**

**Day Two overall standings:**

**Male Teams:**

1. South Africa, 70 points
2. Germany, 65
3. International Team, 54
4. China, 52
5. Benelux, 47
6. Brazil, 44
7. Italy, 36
8. Latin America, 32
9. South Korea, 31
10. Mexico, 29
11. India, 25
12. Middle East, Africa, 23
13. Japan, 21
14. UK, 20
15. France, 19
16. USA, 18

**Female Teams:**

1. Germany, 71
1. Japan, 71
3. Benelux, 62
4. France, 58
5. South Korea, 57
5. International Team, 57

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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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