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BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024 Namibia.
Day 5.
Here and back again. A journey through the Namib desert.

Recap of Day 5.

Location: Midgard, Namibia

Weather: Overcast / Sunny, 9°C - 34°C

Course: 430km: Swakopmund – Moon Landscape – Harmonie –
Windhoek - Midgard

Terrain types: Tarmac 80km, off-road 350km

Tests: SP1: The LEATT Push Challenge, SP2: The Midgard Slow Trial,
SP3: Questionnaire

Top three teams male:

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

Top three teams female:

1. France, 2. International Team, 3. Germany

Midgard. As the Atlantic breeze faded into the distance, the riders knew they were leaving behind the ocean and entering the final, toughest stretch of their journey. Though the end of the GS Trophy was still a day away, the ride ahead marked a turning point - an intense test of endurance, with the finish line finally in sight. The vast, open landscapes of Namibia had become familiar, but today, the riders would push deeper, leaving behind the cool air of the coast for the harsh heat of the interior. With every mile eastward, they edged closer to the culmination of an epic adventure that had tested their limits and brought them together as a team.

The day began in the soft light of dawn, with the sky overcast from the lingering humidity of the Atlantic. Riders gathered for a 7:45 a.m. start, after a hearty breakfast by the ocean. Some wandered down to

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the shoreline, eager to feel the cool, wet embrace of the sea one last time. A few brave - or perhaps crazy - souls even ventured in for a morning swim, relishing the moment. For some, this was their first encounter with the Atlantic, or any ocean at all.

The beach sand clung to them like a final farewell, a souvenir for their journey back to the desert. The dust that had followed them throughout the adventure now mingled with the sand, a reminder of both the places they had been and the road still ahead. Engines roared to life, cutting through the morning mist as the convoy prepared to leave Swakopmund.

The riders pulled away from the coast, leaving behind the cool, salty breeze and the rhythmic crash of the waves. The journey eastward beckoned, a return to the arid embrace of the Namib desert. The day's ride would be long and challenging, but there was a palpable sense of resolve among the riders. Today marked the beginning of the end, the final push before they could rest and reflect on an adventure that had taken them through the heart of one of the world's most beautiful and unforgiving landscapes.

As the riders departed from the lively coastal town of Swakopmund, the contrast was immediate. Just minutes after leaving the ocean's edge, they were once again surrounded by the arid expanse of the Namib Desert. This is the world's oldest desert, a stark and beautiful landscape where the paved road ahead seemed to stretch infinitely into the horizon, offering a rare chance for the riders to absorb the sheer vastness and isolation of this ancient land.

Alongside the road, a single water pipeline traced their path, carrying the lifeblood of the coast to the interior, sustaining life in this otherwise harsh environment. It was a humbling reminder of the resilience and adaptability required to thrive here. Much like the GS Trophy itself, which not only brings adventure but also creates job

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opportunities and global exposure for Namibia, this pipeline represented a vital connection, sustaining the country and its people.

But soon the pavement ended, and the riders were jolted back to reality. The smooth tarmac gave way to a well-graded dirt road, beckoning them to test the full capabilities of their GS bikes. They accelerated, finding their rhythm once more, only to be slowed by a dense fog rolling in from the coast. This thick mist, a familiar companion to the desert so close to the ocean, cloaked their path, forcing them to ease off the throttle and navigate cautiously. Yet, as quickly as it appeared, the fog lifted, revealing the sun above, though its warmth remained elusive. The air remained cold as they ascended towards the imposing Bosua Pass.

The terrain transformed again as they left the desert behind, entering sparse farmlands dotted with patches of vegetation. A testament to the last rainy season, these scattered green patches whispered of a brief, fleeting abundance. Locals spoke of how this region turns lush with grass between December and February, a striking contrast to the dry, dusty land that now stretched out before them.

As they drew closer to the mountains, the rock formations loomed like silent storytellers, their ancient faces etched with the passage of millions of years. Riding through this timeless landscape, it felt as though they were journeying back in time. Nestled within these mighty rocks, a solitary house stood, a lone guardian of the mountains, isolated from the world beyond.

By now, the fog had completely cleared, and the convoy reached an altitude of about 1,200 meters. The sun, now high in the sky, gently warmed their backs as they rode on. The ever-changing scenery of Namibia unfolded before them - dry grass, scattered greenery, and the distant peaks. After nearly 150 kilometers and seemingly in the middle of nowhere, they came upon a surprise: Shell, an official

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sponsor of the GS Trophy, had set up an on-site gas station. Here, the riders refueled both their bikes and themselves, taking a brief but welcome break.

The riders traversed the Moon Landscape, a desolate, otherworldly region known for its barren, lunar-like terrain. Located near the Swakop River, this area features undulating hills and valleys of eroded rock formations carved by millions of years of wind and water erosion. The stark, monochromatic scenery, with its craters and ridges, contrasts the vast, arid plains surrounding it. It's a place where the harshness of nature and the timelessness of the landscape evoke a sense of awe, making one feel as though they've set foot on another planet.

Finally, they reached the summit of Bosua Pass at 1,728 meters - the highest road in Namibia. What a journey it had been, rising from sea level to this majestic height in just one morning. Here, they were ready for the first special challenge of the day, standing at the edge of one of the most dramatic landscapes they had encountered yet.

Day 5, Special Challenge 1: **The LEATT Push Challenge.** This challenge simulated a real-world scenario that every rider dreads - jump-starting a bike with a dead battery. Time began as soon as the riders started pushing the stalled motorcycle, working together to build enough speed to kick the engine to life. The goal was to get the bike running and come to a stop as quickly as possible. It required not just strength, but coordination and quick thinking. Though modern bikes rarely face this issue due to advanced technology, this challenge was a reminder that out in the wild, riders need to be ready for anything. It was a brief but intense test of teamwork and resilience, pushing the riders to solve a problem many might face on a remote trail.

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Rider **Matt Poole (161), of Team UK**, said: "The technique was quite simple, we just push as hard as we can, and my teammate would steer towards the hardpacked dirt, with third gear. Once he had enough speed, he would release the clutch, jump-starting the bike. And it worked quite well!"

At the top of Bosua Pass, the riders were treated to a panoramic view of the Kuiseb River Basin, a lifeline cutting through Namibia's arid landscape. Spanning around 450 kilometers and covering over 21,000 square kilometers, this ephemeral river rarely flows. It only comes to life during significant rainy seasons, like in 2010/11 when it ran for 184 consecutive days - the longest period in recorded history. The basin's upper region, dominated by the Khomas Highland and escarpments, acts as a crucial water catchment area, sustaining the surrounding farmlands and highlands. As the river makes its way westward, it supports diverse ecosystems, including the globally recognized coastal wetland at Walvis Bay, home to extensive bird and marine life. For the riders, this view was not just a reminder of the land's geological past but also of the delicate balance of life sustained by these rare waterways in an otherwise unforgiving terrain.

After the riders completed the first special challenge, they continued their journey along the rugged mountain paths, navigating through the unyielding but captivating terrain of rolling hills, hardpacked dirt, and loose rocks. For another 60 kilometers, they traversed this unforgiving landscape, eventually stopping for a much-needed lunch break amidst the harsh yet stunning surroundings. The day also featured a fourth special stage: **The MPS Questionnaire**, a quiz that challenged even the most knowledgeable riders on BMW Motorrad history and models, adding a cerebral twist to the adventure.

Their path then led them into Windhoek, Namibia's bustling capital - a stark contrast to the isolation they'd experienced so far. Entering Windhoek felt like stepping into another version of Namibia, one

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defined by its commercial and industrial character. The city, with its modern architecture, busy markets, and vibrant atmosphere, presented a surprising shift from the tranquil vastness they had grown accustomed to. The sight of nearly 100 motorcycles winding through the capital's streets turned heads and served as a striking reminder of the adventure they were on.

As the convoy moved through the capital, the riders were struck by the sheer remoteness of the country they were exploring. From Swakopmund to Windhoek, they encountered just four cars, three pedestrians, one cyclist, and two horseback riders - a testament to the sparsely populated nature of this expansive land.

Leaving Windhoek behind, the riders transitioned back onto gravel roads, marking the beginning of the final stretch toward Midgard. This would be the last time they rode on tarmac, a poignant moment signaling the end of an incredible journey across Namibia's diverse terrains. As they approached the Midgard Country Estate, where their adventure had begun, the realization set in that only one day and the final special challenge remained before the conclusion of the GS Trophy.

Day 5, Special Challenge 2: **The Midgard Slow Trial**. At the Midgard Country Estate, the riders gathered for the final special challenge of the day. The goal was not speed but control and precision. Each rider had to navigate a short trial course as slowly as possible without touching a foot to the ground, stopping, or dropping the bike. Time started when the front wheel crossed the cones and ended if the rider dabbed or reached the finish line. The longer the combined times of all three riders, the better their score. It was a test of balance and patience, a true display of skill to close out the day's events.

Rider **Mauro Zucca (153) of Team Italy**, said: "The technique is really simple. We will ride with just the clutch, using the bike's torque, and

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rolling with first gear." After the completion of the challenge, Mauro's hands were shaking. When asked for the reason, he mentioned: "This was unexpected. There were a lot of large stones on the trail, and I grabbed the handlebars as hard as I could, which was a mistake. Unfortunately, that led to a few dabs, but overall, we are very satisfied."

After the last special challenge, the riders began setting up their tents at the Midgard Country Estate, knowing they would be here for two more nights. It was a welcome opportunity to unwind and reflect on the day's challenges. Some took a dip in the pool, washing off the dust and fatigue, while others shared stories from the day's ride, the excitement still palpable in the air. As dinner time approached, the anticipation grew, not just for the food but for the announcement of the day's results. With the competition heating up, Teams Germany and South Africa were locked in a tight battle for the lead, separated by only a few points. The stage was set for an exhilarating final showdown.

Tomorrow marks the last day of the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2024, here in Namibia - a final chance for the teams to leave their mark on this epic adventure.

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Day Five overall standings:

Male Teams:

1. Germany, 233 points
2. South Africa, 199
3. Brazil, 137
4. UK, 134
4. International Team, 134
6. Italy, 133
7. France, 131
8. India, 130



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- 9. Benelux, 121
- 10. Latin America, 119
- 11. South Korea, 109
- 12. China, 107
- 13. Mexico, 97
- 14. Japan, 92
- 15. Middle East, 79
- 16. USA, 76

Female Teams:

- 1. France, 239
- 2. International Team, 238
- 3. Germany, 231
- 4. South Korea, 225
- 5. Japan, 223

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The BMW Group

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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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