



Press release
16. September 2015

BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy Female Team selected after international qualifying event in South Africa.

Stephanie Bouisson, France, Amy Harburg, Australia and Morag Campbell, South Africa, will form the first ever female team in Thailand in 2016.

Munich/Johannesburg. From 13 to 15 September at the Country Trax Off-road Riding Academy in South Africa ten female GS riders from UK, France, Spain, Iceland, USA, Canada, Brazil, Thailand, Australia and South Africa have been battling it out for the ultimate prize – a place on the first ever female team to contest the 2016 International GS Trophy in Southeast Asia from 28 February to 5 March 2016. After an intense series of 13 separate challenges held over three competition days, France's Stephanie Bouisson emerged as the overall winner, followed by Australia's Amy Harburg in second place, with South Africa's Morag Campbell close behind in third. All three ladies will go on to make BMW Motorrad history by forming the first ever female team to enter the BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy – the fifth edition of which will take place in Thailand next spring.

From the very start of this unique 'qualifier' held at Country Trax the spirit and sense of camaraderie among the ten ladies has been inspiring, given that they come from all across the globe and are united only by their love of riding BMW GS motorcycles.

A worldwide search earlier this year for a trio of lady GS riders to form a team to contest the International GS Trophy finals produced a staggering 119 applications by girls from 29 different nations, all keen to show that they had exactly what's needed to represent their country – and also their gender – in the most famous competitive off-road customer motorcycling event in the world.

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From the initial applications, a jury decided on a shortlist of the ten most suitable females to go to South Africa for the qualifying event. The ten girls came from all continents (Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australasia), with ages ranging from 26 to 46-years-old.

The International GS Trophy female team qualifier officially got underway on Sunday 13 September at the Country Trax Off-road Riding Academy, using BMW R 1200 GS bikes equipped with Original BMW Motorrad Accessories to protect against the rigours of off-road competition riding. After all, the tasks the girls would face would be every bit as tough as all other GS Trophy qualifying competitions, and in this case, virtually identical to the recent South Africa 'national' qualifying final held at this same venue.

No sooner had the girls arrived than the challenges began – the first one being a race to pitch their tents for the night – against the clock. Further challenges on the first day included 'Blindfold Cone', 'Fritz-garden' (in homage to "Fritz", the only person to complete this course with a 100 percent success record) and 'Rope the Tree'. A welcome dinner followed but this wasn't the end of the riding for the girls, who had one final challenge to complete – 'The Maze' – despite it being completely dark outside. Late in the evening the rankings were added up and the top three girls announced. Australia's Amy Harburg had taken an early lead, while local lady Morag Campbell was in second, with Jennifer Huntley from the UK in third.

Day two started early for the multi-national squad of ladies, with a photo-shoot with their respective national flags, and interviews before the first of many challenges they would face throughout the day. These included 'The Forest'; 'The Rocks'; 'The Mud' and the imaginatively titled 'Suffer-Ring' later in the morning, all against the clock of course. The afternoon saw the girls take on the 'Up and Downs' enduro skills course before the final challenge of the day, simply known as 'The Oval'.



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With so many challenges completed and just about every kind of skill level tested, it was to be expected that the positions in the rankings would change dramatically. The surprise of the day was France's Stephanie Bouisson, who not only came first overall on the day, but also leapt from fifth to first place in the overall standings. Second of the day was Australia's Amy Harburg, who remained second overall, while in third for the day was the UK's Jennifer Huntley, who slipped one place to fourth on the leader board, behind local lady Morag Campbell.

On 15 September – the final morning of the competition – there remained only two challenges to complete, but with the stakes so high, and so much to lose (or gain), decisions had to be made on whether to take big chances or to play it safe. The first challenge – 'Elephant Turn' – required the girls to ride approximately 50 metres through deep sand, turn their bike around a cone and then return to their starting point. The second was simply entitled 'Skills Challenge' yet it was anything but simple. There were a number of tough trial style obstacles to overcome on a flowing circuit designed to expose any weaknesses in riding technique, including a 360-degree 'coffee-grinder' pipe, a see-saw, a log-jump, riding the pavement, deep ruts and parallel logs, to name just a few.

When the challenge was completed by all ladies, the marshals and judges took their leave to collate the results, while the ten competitors all embraced and offered each other words of encouragement completely in keeping with the true Trophy spirit. Their final challenge was to strike their tents, pack their bags and await the results.

The results were not long in coming, with all the competitors honoured for their amazing efforts during the course of the hard-fought, yet hugely entertaining qualifier. Commenting on this GS Trophy experience, head of BMW Motorrad Marketing Dr. Ralf Rodepeter praised all the ladies for their phenomenal efforts and commitment, stating that: "All these ladies are winners, just to have made it to South Africa to compete in the qualifier. There has been a true spirit and



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sense of camaraderie shown by all the competitors, who have been fighting until the end but have supported each other throughout all the challenges. For sure there have to be three lucky ones who get the chance to go to Thailand, but all ten should consider themselves winners for the way they have come together as a family and demonstrated the unique GS spirit. We truly hope that these amazing ambassadors will take this passion back to their respective countries and riding communities, and will encourage even more women to embrace the GS lifestyle.”

Overall standings and points:

1. Stephanie Bouisson (France) – 1931 pts.
2. Amy Harburg (Australia) – 2098 pts.
3. Morag Campbell (South Africa) – 2153 pts.
4. Jennifer Huntley (UK) – 2824 pts.
5. Inga Birna Erlingsdottir (Iceland) – 3046 pts.
6. Iciar Tatay (Spain) – 3280 pts.
7. Caroline Stevenson (Canada) – 3415 pts.
8. Kim Krause (USA) – 4146 pts.
9. Rosa Freitag (Brazil) – 5621 pts.
10. Dusita Nasuriyawong (Thailand) - retired.

Statements from the three winners:

First place: Stephanie Bouisson (France). “I did the GS Trophy France qualifier event last May, and some time after this, my friends told me to try to apply for the chance of a place at this new women’s qualifying event. I thought ‘why not’ because I wanted to experience South Africa. I was really surprised to get through and was really looking forward to a great new adventure, making new friends and riding over here. To have actually won the qualifying event is incredible for me and I’m very proud to be representing all the lady riders around the world at the International GS Trophy in Thailand next year.”



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Second place: Amy Harburg (Australia). "I was so excited about coming here for this qualifying event. I had high expectations for myself, but it was hard to gauge what the other girls would be like until we were all together. But my expectations were definitely exceeded by the time we've spent in South Africa and to actually make the team is amazing for me. I can't wait to go to Thailand and show BMW enthusiasts worldwide how these GS bikes can be ridden and what we can all do together. My team-mates are incredible so I can't wait to be part of the first ever women's team with them."

Third place: Morag Campbell (South Africa). "My expectations coming to this GS Trophy female qualifying event were to have fun and enjoy myself, but I didn't realise just how much I would learn in the process. It's been a whirlwind of people offering their help, sharing their knowledge and helping me experience a real sense of community that's just been amazing. I think I'm still in shock really to have made it to the final three. There are five months ahead of us now before the main event so I'll be learning new skills on the GS and keeping in touch with Stephanie and Amy. It's going to be awesome!"

For further information about the BMW Motorrad GS Trophy go to

www.gstrophy.com

#gstrophy

The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2014, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.118 million cars and 123,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2013 was € 7.91 billion on revenues amounting to approximately € 76.06 billion. As of 31 December 2013, the BMW Group had a workforce of 110,351 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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