

Dos Hermanas, 23 October 2022

THE W2RC KINGS CROWNED IN ANDALUCIA

In the bikes the 2022 Andalucía Rally win went to an emotional Adrien van Beveren (Monster Energy Honda) ahead of Kevin Benavides (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) with Kevin's brother Luciano (Husqvarna Factory Racing) third. In FIM Cross-Countries Rallies Rally2 category Mason Klein (BAS World KTM Racing) took yet another race win ahead of teammate Bradley Cox and Frenchman Romain Dumontier (Team Dumontier Racing). In the RallyGP FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing) takes the honours with Ricky Brabec (Monster Energy Honda) just hanging onto second place ahead of van Beveren. In the FIM Cross-Country World Cup Rally2 the runner up to the already crowned Klein is Dumontier with Cox taking third off Dabrowski. Honda rounds off a successful Andalucía Rally by winning the FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship Manufacturers title. Sebastien Loeb (Bahrain Raid Xtreme) and Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing) gave us a fantastic final fight for the victory in cars, which in the end went to the Frenchman by just six seconds (Al Rajhi - Toyota Overdrive - completed the podium in T1). Guillaume De Mevius (Red Bull Off Road Junior Team) also won the last stage, ahead of Seth Quintero and Chaleco López, the three drivers who made up the final podium in T3. Pau Navarro (FN Speed) beat Gerard Farrés (Can-Am Factory South Racing) in the fight between the two Spaniards for the win in T4 in the Andalucía Rally, with the new W2RC champion, Rokas Baciуска (South Racing) a privileged spectator.

ON TRACK

For a few months after the 2022 Dakar **Adrien van Beveren's** future was looking less than certain. His long-term employer **Yamaha** announced they were pulling out of rally-raid – on two wheels at least – and there were no obvious vacancies in the other teams. The Frenchman missed the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge and then the news leaked out of his signing to the **Honda** factory team. He made an encouraging debut with them on the Rallye du Maroc with two stage wins for his troubles and now backs that up a couple of weeks later here with the overall victory. As an added bonus he takes third place in the FIM Cross-Country Rallies RallyGP World Championship, missing out on second place by just 1 point! Quite a comeback that bodes well for next January's Dakar, the race he has always dreamed of winning. His 'brother in law' **Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing)** was also delighted to celebrate his season on the beach this morning in Cadiz. Attacking the championship with back-to-back victories on the Dakar and in Abu Dhabi, he was able to nurse an injured wrist and manage the championship with two fifth places on the Rallye du Maroc and here in Andalucía. In Rally2 the lanky American **Mason Klein** continued his outrageous domination of the category taking the overall victory to go with his three other W2RC wins and maximum points score. Klein also wins the FIM Cross-Country World Cup for Rally2 Junior Pilots... You can't help but feel a bit sorry for his very talented podium partners **Romain Dumontier** and **Bradley Cox**... **Dumontier** was a model of consistency finishing 2nd or 3rd in every race while **Cox's** overall W2RC points score was seriously impacted by his DNF in Abu Dhabi. In the FIM Quad Cross-Country Rallies World Cup **Alex Giroud** was also dominate in his category, winning outright the three races he entered. Absent from the Dakar, Juraj Varga nevertheless finishes championship in second place ahead of Mikolaj Krysik. In the Rally3 FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Cup for modified enduro bikes the Moroccan **Amine Echiguer**, third here and winner on the Rallye du Maroc, takes the victory ahead of Andalucía Rally winner **Jeremy Miroir** with **Guillaume Borne** third. The FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Cup Lady's trophy goes to **Mirjam Pol** while the FIM Rally-Raid Trophy for Senior goes to **Mario Patrao**. The FIM W2RC Manufacturers title goes to Honda with 146 points. KTM are second with 90 points and GasGas third with 83 points.

In the cars **Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing)** couldn't hide his joy at the finish line at having achieved his 2022 goal: the FIA World Rally-Champion title. "It tastes very different to the World Cups I have won before. It's the first year of this championship, which everyone has worked so hard on, and to win it is very special," he commented on the beach at Cadiz where he finished the 2022 season.

Although the Qatari only needed to finish the stage to clinch the W2RC title, he fought until the very end for victory in the Andalucía Rally with **Sebastien Loeb (Bahrain Raid Xtreme)**. In fact, he was 22 seconds ahead of the Frenchman, just six seconds shy of taking the win from him. **Al Attiyah** has won the two previous editions of the rally and did not want to lose his unbeaten record in Spain, but his final attack was not quite enough.

For **Loeb**, who was aiming for his tenth FIA World Championship (he has nine in the WRC, more than any other driver in history), the victory in Andalucía allows him to end the season on a high note: his first victory in a W2RC rally and a good way to approach the Dakar 2023. **Yazeed Al Rajhi (Toyota Overdrive)** finished third in the Andalucía Rally... and also in the overall World Rally Raid Championship.

Francisco Chaleco López (Can-Am Factory South Racing) had already mathematically secured his FIA W2RC T3 title before today's stage, so all that remained to be decided was the winner of the Andalucía rally. In the end it was **Guillaume de Mevius (Red Bull Off Road Junior Team)** who dominated the race. The Belgian also won on the final day, proving that he has adapted better than anyone to the atypical route in the south of Spain.

Where there were changes on the last day was in T4, with two Spaniards fighting for the win. **Gerard Farrés (Can-Am Factory South Racing)** started with an advantage over **Pau Navarro (FN Speed)**, but the young Catalan's ambition allowed him to complete a sensational final stage and win his first victory in a W2RC World Championship race.

RADIO BIVOUAC

The Navarro name is an important part of the rally-raid scene in Spain. Santi, the father of our protagonist, runs one of the biggest private structures (**FN Speed**). Pau, one of the frontrunners of the FIA W2RC T4 category in the Andalucía Rally, has just turned 18... and the sport is in his genes.

As soon as he came of age, his number one priority was to get his driving licence so as to be able to compete in T4. But before that, he had already competed in two Dakars. The first, at the age of 16 years and 7 months, as navigator in an assistance truck, making him the youngest participant in history.

With almost no experience (just a small adventure in karting at the age of five and the few times he was able to 'borrow' one of the T4s that the team uses for testing), he took to competition: FIA World Cup for Cross Country Bajas, a few rounds of the Spanish Championship and the FIA World Rally-Raid Championship. And his debut has been brilliant, because he has already won stages in both international competitions (in the Rallye du Maroc he did it even without ever having set a wheel in the dunes before) and he fought until the last day for the victory in Andalucía. His dream now is to compete - why not in the Dakar - alongside his father: *"I'm worried I'll be the co-driver then,"* he jokes. Although, given his performance this season... maybe 'dad' should think about leaving the wheel to one of the future stars of the category.

STAT OF THE DAY:

Each W2RC category winner took a unique but surprisingly similar path to victory. Here's a recap of how they did it: **Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing)** won the Dakar (50 points) and picked up 35 stage points, had a disastrous Abu Dhabi (fortunately for him he wasn't the only one...) only scoring 6 points for his 11th place plus 20 stage points, finished 3rd on the Rallye du Maroc (20 points + 13 stage points) and 2nd here in Andalucía (12.5 + 12) to win the FIA World Rally-Raid Championship (with 168.5 points).

In FIA W2RC T3 '**Chaleco**' Lopez (**Can-Am Factory South Racing**) was Mr Consistent, winning the Dakar and the Abu Dhabi before easing off ever so slightly for the Rallye du Maroc (2nd) and the Andalucía Rally (3rd) to score a total of 199 points

In FIA W2RC T4 **Rokas Baciуска (South Racing Can-AM)** finished 2nd on the Dakar (40 points) 2nd on the Abu Dhabi (25 points), 1st on the Rallye du Maroc (30 points), 2nd on the Andalucía Rally (12.5 points) and amassed 67 stage points = 174.5.

In FIM W2RC RallyGP **Sam Sunderland (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing)** followed a similar pattern to '**Chaleco**' winning the Dakar and Abu Dhabi before dropping the pace for Morocco and Andalucía. (5th on each).

In the FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Cup Rally2 **Mason Klein (BAS World KTM Racing)** didn't beat about the bush, winning every race to make sure he won the series before the last round.

In the FIM Rally-Raid World Cup for Quads Pilots **Alexandre Giroud (Yamaha Racing SMX Drag'on)** also won every race he entered (88 points) allowing him to miss out one whole round.

The common denominator and key to success would seem to be to win or come second on the Dakar, establish your superiority (numerical and / or moral) and then sit back and manage the rest of the championship – put like that it almost sounds easy!

W2RC

Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing), Francisco 'Chaleco' Lopez (Can-Am Factory South Racing), Rokas Baciуска (South Racing Can-Am) and Kees Koolen (Project 2030) are the names that will forever go down in the annals of the first FIA W2RC World Rally-Raid Championship as the first World Rally-Raid Champions. And let's not forget the co-drivers: **Mathieu Baumel (T1), Francois Cazalet (T3), Gustavo Guguelmin (T4) and Wouter de Graaff (T5)**, who were an invaluable help to their team-mates and also deserve to be recognised.

In the FIM Cross Country categories, honours in this first edition of the W2RC went to **Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing), Mason Klein (BAS World KTM), Alexandre Giroud (Yamaha-SRX-Drage'on) and Amine Echiguer (Maroc ART)**. **Mirjan Pol** (women's trophy), **Mario Patrao** (veteran trophy) and **Mason Klein** (junior trophy) also received awards.

And finally, among the constructors, **Toyota Gazoo Racing** in cars and **Honda** on bikes are the first W2RC world champions for the brands.

W2RC standings : [HERE](#)

QUOTES

Adrien van Beveren (Monster Energy Honda): *“It is so good to win. It's been a long time I've been after that. It's not Dakar but it is really important to win. Today I knew Kevin (Benavides) would push a lot and the track was tricky, a lot of stones. All my family are here and that is also important because there always support me. Then my Honda is really amazing and I have been able to upgrade my speed. The team is also really good with me, they receive me as part of the family. I stay calm but I'm really looking forward to Dakar...”*

Sam Sunderland (GasGas Factory Racing): *“After my mistake yesterday in the speed zone I saw there wasn't much chance of a podium so just went steady to bring the (FIM Cross-Country Rallies RallyGP) title back to the team. Super grateful for all their work. Overall a good season. Started off with the Dakar win, then the win in Abu Dhabi, then we had a lull in the battle over the summer and then the back-to-back rounds in Morocco and here. I struggled a bit in Morocco with my wrist, so to nice to be here on the beach with my family celebrating my title.”*

Nasser Al Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing): *“We are very happy for the world title, it has been a very tough year but we have achieved the objectives: winning the Dakar and the W2RC. Sebastien drove an incredible race here, we were only six seconds behind, but we were also looking at the championship. Now we have to defend our titles in both the Dakar and the World Championship.”*

David Castera (Andalucía Rally Race Director): *“Overall, I'm very happy with how the rally went. We had some great racing and all the titles were up for grabs all the way to the last special. We had a really nice stage 3 special which everyone enjoyed, which was difficult. We managed to preserve the rally raid spirit, with the co-drivers put under a lot of pressure. We managed to avoid falling into the trap of running a round of the WRC, which was important here at the gates of Europe. It wasn't easy to achieve but the race was a real success and we are happy to still be here after three years with an event that is so well rounded.”*

MEDIA CONTENT

Stage 4: photos and quotes of the day, including interview with David Castera : [DROPBOX](#)

Videos : [HERE](#)



Andalucía = RALLY =



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