

Rimini (Italy), 4 December 2022

# FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIP

**2022 FIM Awards Ceremony**

## Sam Sunderland opens the W2RC book

**Key points:**

- On Saturday 3 December at the Rimini Congress Centre in Italy, the FIM brought together more than 40 2022 World Champions for its traditional awards ceremony in the presence of its re-elected president Jorge Viegas.
- For its first season of four rounds, inaugurated for the first time in its history by the Dakar, the W2RC made its official entry among the disciplines rewarded with an FIM World Championship title.
- In the presence of more than eight hundred guests from all over the world, Sam Sunderland received the first ever W2RC World Champion crown, opening a new page in the FIM's awards book.

2022 was a milestone year for rally-raid. For the first time, **FIM bikes** and **FIA cars** came together under a common banner and programme, that of the **W2RC**, whose promotion was entrusted to the Amaury Sport Organisation (A.S.O.).

The opening round of the calendar was won by **GasGas** mounted **Sam Sunderland**, who scored a second victory in ten Dakars, after that of 2017. At the **Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge**, the British rider took a serious option on the title before the halfway point of the championship by winning in the Emirates for the third time in his career (2017, 2019 and 2022). Fifth at both the **Rallye du Maroc** and the **Andalucía Rally**, Sam secured the lead he had established on the first two rounds to finish with a total of 85 points to American **Ricky Brabec**'s 59 and Frenchman **Adrien Van Beveren**'s 58, his two closest challengers, both **Honda** mounted.

It was also the second World Championship title for the Briton, who has already been rewarded by the FIM in 2019.

By winning both the Dakar and the 2022 W2RC title in the same year, **Sunderland** leaves two big boot marks on the first W2RC season!

To honour its rally-raid World Champion, the FIM gave **Sunderland** a triumphant 'bus of champions' tour before the Briton donned his dinner jacket to take the red carpet to the traditional gala dinner. The evening concluded with **Valentino Rossi** taking to the stage to receive a special award before the final bouquet reserved for the seven stars of the evening: **Sam Sunderland** (Rally-Raid), **Toni Bou** (Trials), **Andrea Verona** (Enduro), **Bartosz Zmarzlik** (Speedway), **Tim Gajser** (Motocross), **Alvaro Bautista** (Superbike) and **Francesco Bagnaia** (MotoGP).

**Sam Sunderland** has less than a month left to fully enjoy his title. Before the end of December, he will already go back to defend his crown on the tracks of Saudi Arabia. The W2RC 2023 season will start on December 31 with the prologue of the 45<sup>th</sup> edition of the Dakar, the first round of the championship.

**Quotes:****Sam Sunderland, 2022 W2RC World Champion:**

" For sure it's been a great year for me and for GasGas. The Dakar and Abu Dhabi went really well, winning both and then we had a long summer break with Kazakhstan being cancelled. Coming back to Morocco after the break I had a small fall in the pre-race training, hurting my wrist, so the race was a bit of a struggle. Andalucia started out well, winning the prologue and I had a good feeling and wanted to

end the year on a high, but after a 6 min speed penalty and with the race being shortened by a stage there wasn't much time to mount a comeback, so I kept it safe to wrap up the title!  
Currently I'm training hard for the upcoming Dakar..."

**Jorge Viegas, President of the FIM:**

" For the W2RC it was a first year with a promoter, a first time with the Dakar and finally a first time for GasGas. So many firsts that make Sam Sunderland's title a great victory."

**David Castera, A.S.O. / Promoter:**

"The first W2RC season fully delivered on its promise. The harmonisation of the rules and race formats allowed all the teams and competitors to be present at each round. From now on, the whole rally-raid ecosystem will work all year round for its development and the safety of its competitors.

I would like to congratulate Sam Sunderland who is the big winner of this first season. Following on from his two victories on the Dakar and the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, he was able to stay up front at the end of the championship, as he has done for many years. His consistency, one of the pillars of the discipline, rewards his season but also his many years of work.

In addition to the top riders, the new generation of rising stars in Rally 2 have been able to flourish and benefit from the support of manufacturers."

**Did you know?**

By winning the Dakar and the World Championship title in the same year Sam Sunderland has pulled off a feat last achieved by Marc Coma back in 2014.

**All the winners of the 2022 W2RC:**

- Manufacturers' World Champion: Monster Energy Honda
- Rally 2 World Cup / Rally 2 Junior Trophy: Mason Klein (USA - BAS World KTM Racing)
- Rally 3 World Cup: Amine Echiguer (Mar - Maroc ART)
- Quad World Cup: Alexandre Giroud (Fra - Yamaha Racing SMX Drag'on)
- Women's Trophy: Miriam Pol (Ndl - HT Rally Raid Husqvarna Racing)
- Veteran's Trophy: Mario Patrao (Por - Credit Agricola-Mario Patrao Motosport)

More information on the [website](#).

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