

# True champions taste glory after coming through testing Silk Way Rally

Dmitry Sotnikov and Matthias Walkner win big at the 2021 Silk Way Rally © Kin Marcin/Red Bull Content Pool

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**The chequered flag has flown at the 2021 Silk Way Rally and the off-road adventure was memorable for a number of reasons. There was a home victory for Team Kamaz Master in the truck contest while Red Bull KTM Factory Racing took the two-wheel title. We also had a course alteration that saw the rally reduced from 10 stages to five.**

Following a ceremonial start in the Siberian city of Omsk, the 11th edition of the Silk Way Rally proceeded as planned for the next two days. However, once the convoy reached the Mongolian border it was decided by race organisers that rally would not leave Russia due to the pandemic situation in the neighbouring country. A contingency plan was implemented that saw the rally conclude with three extra stages in Russia.

It meant that this Silk Way Rally turned out to be an entirely home race for Russian truckers [Team Kamaz Master](#). Leading the charge for the Blue Armada from stage one was [2021 Dakar Rally](#) winner **Dmitry Sotnikov**.

Sotnikov was racing in Kamaz's the new look K5 Cab and he gave the redesigned truck the perfect debut as he followed up stage one's victory with another win on stage two. A further stage win was added on stage four and he crossed the finish line the next day to claim his third Silk Way Rally overall victory.

*"This win is for our entire team, for all fans, for everyone who helped build the truck. Not a single technical problem arose during the race."* – **Dmitry Sotnikov**

Sotnikov was supported the whole way by his fellow Kamaz drivers **Anton Shibalov**, **Eduard Nikolaev** and **Ayrat Mardeev** who all finished inside the truck race Top 5.

Over in the bike race it was up to [Matthias Walkner](#) to fly the flag for Red Bull KTM Factory Racing. Walkner's team-mate [Sam Sunderland](#) won the first-ever bike race at the Silk Way in 2019 but injury meant that the Brit was not in Russia to defend his title. Could 2018 Dakar winner Walkner claim top spot this time for KTM?

A steady start to the rally saw Walkner placed fourth after two stages. On stage three the Austrian biker made his move as he set the day's fastest time and took the lead of the general classification. For the remaining two days of racing Walkner used all his experience and race craft to protect his lead. Victory in Russia moves Walkner to top spot in the 2021 FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship.

*"It's a shame the rally had to be shortened, but the organisers did a great job of giving us a full event to race. To win the famous tiger trophy here at the Silk Way feels amazing, and with my win here I'm now also leading the championship. I couldn't have asked for a better result really."* – **Matthias Walkner**

Also tasting success in the bike race was GasGas Factory rider [Daniel Sanders](#). The Aussie scored his maiden World Championship stage win on the second day of racing in Russia. Sanders followed up his victory by setting the fastest times on stages four and five as well. It was results like this that helped Sanders to a fourth place finish overall, less than a minute away from a podium result.

*"I learned a lot this week, I felt great on the bike, and I know I have the speed so it's all positive. When we get home from here my main focus will be on improving my navigation as this is where I feel I'm lacking a little bit. But overall, a pretty decent week for me and the team."* – **Daniel Sanders**

Next up in the six-round 2021 FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship is the Rally dos Sertões, running August 13-22. Coming next in the seven-round 2021 FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies is the BP Ultimate Portugal Cross-Country Rally, running September 16-21.

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## RESULTS

### 2021 Silk Way Rally – Truck race Top 5

1. **Dmitry Sotnikov (RUS), KAMAZ 6:59:53**
2. Sjarhei Viazovich (BLR), MAZ 7:04:29 +4:36
3. **Anton Shibalov (RUS), KAMAZ 7:05:30 +5:37**
4. **Eduard Nikolaev (RUS), KAMAZ 7:17:35 +17:42**
5. **Ayrat Mardeev (RUS), KAMAZ 7:28:19 +28:26**

### 2021 Silk Way Rally – Bike race Top 5

1. **Matthias Walkner (AUT), KTM, 6:19:18**
2. Skyler Howes (USA), Husqvarna, 6:25:38 +6:20
3. Franco Caimi (ARG), Hero, 6:25:44 +6:26
4. **Daniel Sanders (AUS), GASGAS, 6:26:37 +7:19**
5. Sebastian Buhler (GER), Hero, 6:29:36 +10:18



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