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It went well, Jan Kopecký beamed after his sixth victory

Last year the Czech driver Jan Kopecký (Škoda Fabia R5) took home the winner's cup, having won Barum rally five times, and on the 47th Barum Czech Rally Zlín he won again. Just like last year, his biggest rival was the Russian driver Alexey Lukyanuk (Ford Fiesta R5) who finished second. And the third one was Roman Kresta (Škoda Fabia R5) after a brilliant performance on the last stage.

Kopecký won Barum Czech Rally Zlín for the third time in a row and as always he appreciated it very much. **'It was a demanding weekend but everything went well,'** Kopecký said, who is representing Škoda Motorsport team and he won this rally in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. **Barum rally is wonderfully organised and has probably the best fans in the world. If we get a chance to come back, we will,'** Kopecký promised during the final press conference.

Throughout Leg 1 Lukyanuk and Kopecký were neck to neck and the gap was very small between them. It was during Leg 2 that Kopecký increased his lead, kept a steady pace while Lukyanuk was getting more and more tired. **'I think he couldn't use his left leg properly when using breaks so he changed them. That slowed him down and then we didn't have to push and only focused on keeping the same speed. On the last stage I was very careful not to hit some stone and got a puncture, that would change everything,'** Jan Kopecký said.

It was his 17th consecutive victory on domestic rallies. **'I didn't analyse the statistics. It's not for me but it's admirable. We had lot of luck, great car and great team Škoda Motorsport. Our team always has our backs as you can see. We're putting in practice everything we learned on European competitions,'** the Czech champion said.

Great ovation received Alexey Lukyanuk after his brave performance. He kept up with Kopecký in the first Leg but towards the end he was feeling more exhausted than usually. The 36-year-old Russian had a terrible accident three months ago while testing and it wasn't clear whether he would come to Zlín because he sustained severe injuries. He took the risk, competed in Barum rally till the end. **'One month ago, I was lying in a hospital. I did everything I could considering circumstances. I had troubles with breaks, my legs are not strong enough yet and they hurt,'** Lukyanuk said.

Before the start of Barum Czech Rally Zlín he thought he was fit enough to compete. However, the very first stage showed him that it might be still too early after the accident and the tropical weather didn't help him either. **'Especially the left leg was bad. It made everything more complicated. But we did it. At the end I was careful and trying to get safely to finish. We're happy to finish and be second,'** the driver of Russian Performance Motorsport said.

For three years was Roman Kresta missing on Barum rally. This year he decided to return and immediately ended up on the podium since Václav Pech retired on Sunday morning. For a while Tomáš Kostka was occupying the third place, but his brother-in-law overtook him at the end and both of them were driving Škoda Fabia R5. Kresta won the last stage and got 3 seconds on Kostka and took the third place. **It wasn't clear right until the end and that was crazy. We had a blast on Barum rally. The third place is more than we expected. Thanks to my team and fans,** Kresta said.

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