



PRESS RELEASE No. 9

Neil Simpson ready to enter Barum Rally

One of the first received entries to 44th Barum Czech Rally Zlín came from the Great Britain. Neil Simpson will come to the Czech Republic with Claire Mole and together they will run their Škoda Fabia S2000 at the Czech ERC round.

Simpson (41), a cars seller from Clitheroe, Lancashire, has returned back to rallies after long twelve years brake. His last appearance on special stages was dated back to 2001 when he participated in the British rally championship with a Volkswagen Polo S1600. At the same time he had been working as an official development driver for Volkswagen Motorsport. But after end of this cooperation Simpson decided to take over his family business and give the rallysport activities on a sidetrack.

“I made a promise to myself that I wouldn't rally while I developed the business. After twelve years, we felt the time was right to return to rallying,” said the owner of one of the most successful Škoda dealerships in the UK. **“We now have two dealerships in the North of England and thoroughly enjoy the Škoda brand. And what better way to make a comeback than at the wheel of the incredible Škoda Fabia S2000?”** explained Simpson his rally-comeback.

Neil bought a true weapon for this comeback. His Fabia S2000 has a factory origin and rich history as well. Back in 2013 Freddy Loix won at Geko Ypres Rally with it and the car appeared also in Zlín, driven by Finnish factory driver Esapekka Lappi. Simpson's schedule originally contained selected events in the UK and few other countries including two ERC rallies - Circuit of Ireland a Geko Ypres Rally. As the time ran the team decided to change the plans and to add Barum Czech Rally Zlín to the list.

“Why we chose the Barum Rally? The Czech Republic is homeland of Škoda and Barum Czech Rally Zlín is fantastic race. I spectated here back in 2012 and the stages looked really challenging. Also the Czech fans were incredible, they made really fantastic atmosphere around. That's why we decided to appear in Zlín this year,” said Neil Simpson about his plan changes. **“I have seen the stages also on Youtube and they very varied in terms of their character. I think the weather may play a significant role in the event. I'm looking forward to it very much!”**

Neil Simpson will be co-driven by Claire Mole who joined him also at previous ERC rallies in Ireland and Belgium. And their performance in these events wasn't bad at all. **“We competed in the Circuit of Ireland and finished 5th. We were 6th in Ypres Rally until we made a small mistake and got stuck in a ditch on the second day,”** summarised Simpson his up to now ERC campaign. **“I am still learning the Škoda Fabia S2000. The support I have received from Skoda Motorsport in Mladá Boleslav in my first year back in the sport has been outstanding and I cannot thank them enough for their help and advice. There are a lot of very fast Czech drivers who know the event very well so I need to be realistic. The top 15 would be good and if we finished in the top 10 I would be delighted.”**

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