



PRESS RELEASE no. 27 Will Abbring take up on his 2010 result?

Kevin Abbring has always belonged to the best drivers among his contemporaries. There were times when this fast youngster fought for grace and rally wins with Thierry Neuville or Hans Weijs. But compared to the fresh WRC Rally Deutschland winner, both Dutchmen decided to jump directly to the World rally championship, which hasn't brought them much luck.

Kevin spent in the JWRC several years and he succeeded in the European Renault Clio R3 cup. But none of this led to some strong rally engagement. After one another year in a French gravel championship he was offered to drive for a newly formed squad of the Volkswagen Motorsport. But this project was rather frustrating than enjoyable for him. With no major experience with driving 4WD cars he was did overall four rallies with a Škoda Fabia S2000. And despite he did quite well and finished twelfth overall in the Rallye Monte Carlo and Wales Rally GB, there was still no reasonable project on sight.

That's why Kevin risked and decided to start again from the beginning. He entered a French Peugeot 208 R2 rally cup with one and only target – to win the main prize consisting of doing several ERC rallies with a fully backed R5 car. **"The success in the 208 cup was very important. It was a huge risk taking part in a French championship with new rallies and a new type of car which I never drove before. I took this step back and threw myself in between all young talented. I simply had to win rallies and win the championship, otherwise it would have been a hard way back into the international rally scene. But I think a lot of people appreciated the step I took and the performance I showed, even with a co-driver which wasn't experienced at all at that time. But he helped me out financially so I could drive that season and come back on the level where I belong. I have some experience in WRC so people always think you have a huge experience. But in real compared to 99% of the other drivers I've only done like 40% of the kilometres they did. I think my maximum amount of rallies I did was seven in a year, including one local rally. Sometimes it's hard to explain people when they compare,"** explains Abbring his breaking year.

So despite many troubles Abbring found his way into the Peugeot Rally Academy team. He proved his speed in all events he entered with a Peugeot 208 T16, however he was facing an unreliability of this brand new car. Wasn't Kevin frustrated when retiring from the competition leading positions? **"I would not be honest if I'd say it wasn't frustrating. I mean, it is also an opportunity and way to show people what I am worth. OK, we lost the lead in three out of four rallies due to mechanical problems so we can say the performance is there and I do what I've been asked. Though at the end people only remember you when you reach the podium at the end of the rally. I hope I impressed the right people. We did a test after Ypres which showed all of us that the reliability is getting better and better, we all work hard to improve the new car.**



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We did a little bit of suspension work which we think will help in the Barum Rally. Even more we will do another pre-event test in the week of the rally."

Kevin Abbring isn't a novice to the Zlín rally, he did it already in 2010. **"I will never forget this rally, that year we competed with a car we build in 3 days. I was unlucky in WRC in Germany which was just a week before Barum and we had to use a new bodysell. It was hard work but the Dutch guys from MCC Sport managed to finish the car on time with some help from friends. The rally went well, we won the 2WD category!"** remembers Abbring.

And what does he think about the Czech stages? **"I think as a driver, any rally has to suit me. Though I have to adapt to the circumstances by adapting myself and the car to the stages and conditions, which aren't easy in Barum! It's especially difficult to read the road in terms of grip. For the rest the rally is very fast and can be tricky due to muddy corners at high speed. A lot of roads are narrow and in the forest. It won't be easy, Škoda will be very strong. Let's say I hope it suits me!"**

In Zlín 26 August 2014

Petr LINHART
press centre
Barum Czech Rally Zlín