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### ERC Junior before Barum Rally: Griebel and Ingram fight for the title

European Junior Championship has been fine revitalization of the European Championship. Its two winners so far, Stéphane Lefebvre and Emil Bergkvist have already tried competing with R5 and WRC cars and this season they are regularly seen at World Championship events. Other ERC drivers are not falling behind - Ralfs Sirmacis won two ERC events with the car Škoda Fabia R5. So who will succeed them?

At the beginning, it seemed that the fight would be between drivers of Opel and Peugeot but the tables turned. While drivers of the German brand were achieving faster times, their competition on Peugeot lagged behind. After four events it is clear, that final fight will be between Chris Ingram and Marijan Griebel. At first sight, the British driver seems to have a better position with 11 points ahead, however, Griebel might benefit from the erasing rule. According to ERC Junior Regulations, only the best four results out six count. So while Ingram has been three times on a second position and once third, evidently faster Griebel has already under his belt all three top positions.

Another evidence of evenness of ERC Junior is that in its four events, the junior rally has celebrated four different winners. In Ireland, Polish youngster Lukasz Pieniazek shocked everyone with his victory, later on Azores domestic driver Diogo Gago claimed victory, in Belgium it was Marijan Griebel and in Estonia Miko-Ove Niinemäe. Dominance of Opel is underlined by Julius Tannert on the third position but with greater point margin. His competition for bronze is Lukasz Pieniazek, Joonas Tokee and Dominik Brož.

It has been already said that Opel drivers are doing wonders this season but Peugeot drivers are paying for their faults. One of the biggest favourites Steve Rokland had a nasty accident on Circuit of Ireland and after basically demolishing his car, he was short on money for the rest of the season. Winner of Azores burned down his hopes after an accident at the beginning of Kenotek Ypres Rally. Fast Nikolay Gryazin pays for his driving mistakes appearing often off track. A Czech crew is also trying their luck in this year's ERC Junior. Dominik Brož and Petr Těšínský are competing with slightly older Ford Fiesta R2, however, their priority is to gain experience from foreign events. So far they are doing a good job, with 41 points they are occupying sixth position and close to the third.

Barum Czech Rally Zlín is a penultimate event of ERC Junior. The last event is Latvian Rally Liepaja, which has been postponed from mid-September to February due to bad weather.

## Current standings of ERC Junior after 4 events

1. Chris Ingram (GBR)	111
2. Marijan Griebel (DEU)	110
3. Julius Tannert (DEU)	50
4. Lukasz Pieniazek (POL)	48
5. Joonas Tokee (FIN)	41
6. Dominik Brož (CZE)	41

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