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The competition is tough, Kopecký knows

The five-time winner of Barum Czech Rally Zlín Jan Kopecký aspires to be at the top again. He has already secured himself victory in TrueCam Czech Rally Championship 2017, but Barum rally is difficult. Last year, he was neck to neck with Russian Alexey Lukyanuk right until the end and Lukyanuk is competing again in the 47th Barum rally.

Despite winning Czech Championship on his Škoda Fabia R5, he still has motivation to go on. He won 16 consecutive rallies in Czech Championship and he hopes to go for another victory. **'Barum rally is always the top moment of rally season in Czech Republic and this year is no different. The competition here is quite tough. Moreover, the Clerk of the Course Mr. Regner prepared some new sections that I have never ridden. I'm hoping this trend would go on and I'm looking forward to them,'** Kopecký said, Škoda Motorsport.

The 35-year-old driver, born in Opočno, and his long-term partner in crime, co-driver Pavel Dresler surely want to make a new record here. **'It's going to be an interesting weekend, so let's enjoy it together. The atmosphere is always unique here. I'm glad to be part of a sport that is watched by so many fans. Every crew feels their support,'** Kopecký said, who won Barum rally in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016.

His greatest rival should be the Russian express Alexey Lukyanuk on Ford Fiesta R5. Despite suffering a serious accident in spring and then being out for three-months, his result on Qualifying Stage suggests he's back in shape. **'I can manage to drive a car but I'm not fit enough for a long run,'** Lukyanuk smiled.

The 36-year-old member of Russian Performance Motorsport team fought with Kopecký until the last stage, where he made a mistake which cost him top ten. **'It was my mistake and I hope I won't repeat it. It would be ideal if Jan and I swap last year's places before the last stage. I'm very happy to be back in Zlín. I'm especially looking forward to stages Semetín and Troják,'** Lukyanuk said.

French Bryan Bouffier, Ford Fiesta R5, is among the favourites and he's competing for the Zlín team Gemini Clinic Rally Team. **'It's great to be back. I didn't do very well in qualification but I firmly believe that we'd improve with time. I can't wait to experience the atmosphere and organisation. I can imagine how difficult it must be to organise such event for it to have the necessary background and quality,'** Bouffier said. The 38-year-old driver had his premiere in Zlín 10 years ago.

One of the many Czech drivers in the starting field is Filip Mareš. This driver of ACCR Czech Team currently holds fourth place in the ERC Junior. He achieved great result finishing second on Rally Rzeszów, Poland. **'It's my best result yet. I'm very happy to be representing the Czech Republic and my thanks go to Auto-club and the partners of our project,'** the 26-year-old driver said, who wants to keep up in his category U27 with the best ones. **'It's going to be hard. We could be under more pressure since it's a domestic rally and the expectations are high. After a rally in Poland, there's no reason not to feel confident. Our goal is to win a special stage, ideally more than one,'** Mareš said.

The 47th Barum Czech Rally Zlín is a sixth event of FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) series and likewise a sixth event of TrueCam Czech Rally Championship 2017 (MČR). The competing crews will surely do their best in this difficult rally set on mostly tarmac surface of total length 684 km with 15 special stages of length 215 km.

The 47th Barum rally opens with the very popular Spectators' Super Special Stage in night in the streets of Zlín and former Baťa's factory and the usual Legs are scheduled for the weekend. The three-day event ends on a finishing ramp on Sunday 27th August at 4:16 p.m. on the same place.

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