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Leg 1 of Star Rally Historic ruled by Neumann, Janota retired

Star Rally Historic, the traditional part of the Barum Czech Rally Zlín, welcomed the Czech historic rally championship this year again. But for the first time, the competition is running up to Sunday and compared to previous years, crews will have count running times and leave the cars in the overnight parc fermé after Saturday leg.

The competition part of the historic race was traditionally started with a Friday super special stage in the streets of Zlín. It was clearly dominated by two-time Star Rally winner Vlastimil Neumann with Martin Hlavatý driving a Ford Escort RS Cosworth. They were followed by Miroslav Janota and Petr Novák with an Opel Kadett GT/E losing 20 seconds. The former champion of the historical European rally championship has so far started in Zlín only with contemporary cars, so this year he made his premiere in Moravia with his proven yellow Opel. The third fastest time on the city circuit was recorded by the winner of the Star Rally from 2016, Lubomír Tenkl with a BMW M3 and co-driven by Jiří Rada.

In Saturday's part, four challenging stages were waiting for the crews. The semi-circuit stage Březová came as the first one. Neumann again used the power of his car again and passed Janota by another 13 seconds. The third quickest time again belonged to Tenkl and the running order of the fastest three remained unchanged. However, only until the next SS Hošťálková, which contained much more muddy and wet sections. The rear-wheel drive cars began to lose. Janota kept holding second place overall, however Tenkl fell down by four places. It was Petr Jurečka who took his position driving his 4WD Subaru Impreza 555, and Jindřich Štolfa with the Rover 220 GTI also moved forward with the third fastest time.

After a service break in Zlín, the crews set out on the eight kilometres long stage Komárov, which was again friendly for the classic RWD cars. The fastest times were again recorded by the trio of Neumann, Janota, Tenkl, but nothing has changed in the overall ranking of the top ten. But it was shuffled at the next stage Pindula, which was even more challenging this year than the Hošťálková stage. Neumann did not avoid the mistake and after technical failure his biggest rival Janota was forced to retire. The fastest time was recorded by Štolfa, who jumped to second place overall (+1:48.5 to Neumann), Jurečka remains third before the Sunday's leg (+2:08.1). **"It was not easy at all today. The beginning was great on a dry clean surface, then we went to Vsetín region, where it started to rain. But the hardest stage was Pindula, really a challenger, we slid into a ditch there and fought with it a bit. We lost something there, but fortunately we are at the finish line today, the car is working and we are looking forward to tomorrow,"** said Vlastimil Neumann at the finish of the first stage.

The Friday and Saturday part of the Star Rally Historic also included a traditional demonstration drive of rally legends. In addition to interesting cars, it welcomed also two former Barum rally winners this year - the winner of the 1974 Barum rally

Wolfgang Hauck from Germany returned to Zlín after 45 years, this time with an Opel Kadett GT/E. The winner of the ninth edition of the Zlín competition in 1979, Václav Blahna, set off behind the wheel of a Lada VFTS.

While the Star rally ended on Saturday evening for the rally legends demonstration drive, another 74 competition kilometres divided between five special stages await for the measured part of the starting field on Sunday. The crew arrives at the finish line in Zlín in the evening after 7 pm.

Star Rally Historic - running order after Leg 1:

1. Neumann, Hlavatý (CZE, Ford Escort RS Cosworth)	47:02,7 min
2. Štolfa, Hawel (CZE, Rover 220 GTI)	+ 1:48,5 s
3. Jurečka, Jurečka (CZE, Subaru Impreza 555)	+ 2:08,1 s
4. Klepáč, Krčma (CZE, Peugeot 309 GTI)	+ 2:08,6 s
5. Budil, Vejvoda (CZE, BMW 2002 TI)	+ 2:26,8 s
6. Knížek, Šlegl (CZE, BMW 318 iS)	+ 2:27,8 s
7. Kučera, Slováček (CZE, BMW 318 iS)	+ 2:33,7 s
8. Tenkl, Rada (CZE, BMW M3)	+ 2:40,9 min
9. Šrámek Horáček (CZE, BMW 318 iS)	+ 4:00,6 min
10. Bělohradský, Rieger (CZE, BMW 318 iS)	+ 4:23,4 min

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