

PRESS RELEASE no. 49

Pindula decided Saturday's leg, Erik Cais is leading!

The jubilee 50th Barum Czech Rally Zlín 2021 has got Saturday's 1st leg behind. Drivers completed 8 special stages, and surprisingly, the first place is held by a young driver Erik Cais (Ford Fiesta R5 MkII) who defeated the eight-time Zlín rally champion Jan Kopecký in a Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo by 2.1 seconds after Saturday.

SS Březová opened Saturday, where the difference between the first three drivers was only 2.1 seconds in the European classification, they were Kopecký, Norwegian Mikkelsen (Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo) and the third Cais. Václav Pech (Ford Focus WRC) absolutely won the special stage, but run only within the Czech national championship. After this SS, Tomáš Kostka (Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo) retired from the race due to technical failure. Jan Kopecký ruled the following feared special stage Hošťálková, Cais was behind him with 3.1 seconds gap and the imaginary bronze belonged to the Austrian Simon Wagner (Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo). In the end, only eleven cars successfully reached the finish line, as the stage was cancelled after the hard accident of Dominik Stříteský (Škoda Fabia R5). Although the differences on the eight-kilometer track were not significant, the third Saturday stage at Komárov brought the first place to Mikkelsen. However, Cais (+ 0.6 s) and Kopecký (+1.7 s) finished close behind him. Even this time, Pech absolutely won. Then a 19 km stage named Pindula followed. The youngster Cais wanted to taste the feeling of victory in the SS again, and he succeeded. With a time of 10:19.9 minutes, he defeated his Norwegian rival by 1.7 seconds and overtook the fourth Kopecký by 8.5 seconds.

The second pass through Březová brought a similar picture as in the morning. Pech absolutely won and Kopecký ruled the European classification having Cais and Mikkelsen close behind. The following SS7 Hošťálková with a length of 18.86 kilometers showed that Cais's good at long tracks. With a time of 10:18.0 minutes, he left Kopecký behind by 3.9 seconds and Norwegian Mikkelsen by 7.9 seconds! Unfortunately, even this time it was not possible to successfully complete this stage. Finn Jari Huttunen (Hyundai i20 R5) crashed first, then Adam Březík (Škoda Fabia R5) met a technical problem before the start, and the German Albert von Thurn und Taxis (Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo) also had an accident. Just before the last part of Saturday, Cais lost to Kopecký only eight tenths of a second. Unlike from the second pass at Komárov, where he did not do very well. On the short 8 km track, Kopecký celebrated the first place with a time of 4:40.8 minutes, which left Mikkelsen behind by three seconds and the 22-year-old rider from Fryšták even by five seconds.

It was raining before the start of the 9th special stage and it was delayed a bit. The tricky Pindula, regardless the wet terrain and the dark, was ruled by Cais again. He reached a time of 10:47.0 minutes and, just like in the first pass, he controlled it well. He left Filip Mareš behind with 5.6 seconds and most importantly, he overtook Kopecký by eight seconds without the one tenth at Pindula! Herczig finished fourth, with Mikkelsen taking fifth place.

The proof of the difficult conditions of the SS9 2nd pass is also the fact that the drivers drove half a minute slower on average than in the first pass of Pindula.

Overall, before Sunday's 2nd leg, the 22-year-old Cais is in the lead, 2.1 seconds behind him is Kopecký. Mikkelsen takes the third place with a gap of 16.6 seconds to the leader of the competition. There is a big gap behind the podium of the European Championship, the fourth is the Austrian Wagner who loses 38 seconds to the bronze position. Mareš is the fifth and Miroslav Jakeš (Škoda Fabia R5) closes the top ten.

Only Ken Torn from Estonia (Ford Fiesta Rally3) left in the ERC Junior category. In the ERC2 category, the Hungarian Tibor Érdi junior (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X) leads 36.3 seconds ahead of the Frenchman Cartier (Toyota Yaris Rally4). The category of 2WD, ERC3 + ERC3J is ruled by the fearless Spaniard Josep Bassas, whose Peugeot 208 Rally4 is 56 seconds ahead of the Romanian Norbert Maior (Peugeot 208 Rally4).

The jubilee edition of the Barum rally will result in the final day, which will take place on Sunday, August 29. The final part starts at 8:03 a.m. at SS Halenkovice and ends at 2:33 p.m. with the passing through the longest leg in the itinerary called Májová. In total, the drivers will run 6 stages on three legs in the length of 84 km.

Classification after Leg 1:

1. Cais, Žáková (CZE, Ford Fiesta R5 MkII)	1:13,41,0 hod
2. Kopecký, Hloušek (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 2,1 s
3. Mikkelsen, Andersson(NOR/SWE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 16,6 s
4. Pech,Uhel (CZE, Ford Focus WRC)	+ 30,5 s
5. S. Wagner, Winter (AUT, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 54,6 s
6. Mareš, Bucha (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 1:02,9 min
7. Herczig, Ferencz (HUN, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 1:05,3 min
8. Marczyk, Gospodarczyk (POL, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 1:30,9 min
9. Llarena, Fernandezová (ESP, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 2:04,5 min
10. Devine, Fulton (IRL, Ford Fiesta R5 MkII)	+ 2:19,3 min
18. Torn, Pannas (EST, Ford Fiesta Rally3), 1. místo ERCJ	+ 6:06,7 min
24. Érdi jr., Csökö (HUN, Mitsubishi Lancer EVO X), 1. ERC2	+ 8:02,8 min
28. Bassas, Coronado (ESP, Peugeot 208 Rally4), 1. ERC3	+ 9:02,4 min

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INFORMATION