

## **PRESS RELEASE no. 32**

### **Držková sharply reduced the standings, European champion Llarena is out of the game!**

The first part of Saturday's opening leg of the 51st Barum Czech Rally Zlín 2022 brought an attractive show even with the rainy weather. Many drivers dropped out, including this year's European champion Efrén Llarena from Spain, but the best ones continue, led by the Zlín rally's superstar Jan Kopecký!

Unpredictable weather. What the drivers feared the most before the start of Saturday's stage came first thing in the morning at SS Březová. In the end, the sometimes wet and sometimes dry track suited the Hungarian Miklós Csomós the most. His car with the starting number 47 set the fastest time of 8:14.8 minutes!

Václav Pech finished 5.7 seconds behind. The third place went to Adam Březík, who thanked his father for the great tyres at the finish line. On the other hand, the winner of Friday night's SS, Jan Kopecký, was unable to choose the right tyres as he was troubled by aquaplaning. The time was clearly affected: tenth place with a 16.5-second loss behind the winner. Half a second ahead of him was Filip Mareš, who was slowed down by a spin at the arena in Slušovice.

Saturday's second stage, the 24.32-kilometre long Držková stage, considerably affected the line-up. The Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo of the Kopecký, Hloušek crew did a great job, with a time of 13:47.3 minutes and was ahead of the second-placed Filip Mareš by 18.4 seconds. Erik Cais finished third with a gap of 19.8 seconds to the winner, saying at the finish that he was driving at his limits and Kopecký's time was just unfeasible to him.

But then complications appeared. A heavy crash met the Spanish crew of Llarena and Fernandez, already a certain winner of the European Championship, and the race was stopped for tens of minutes. After Italian Roberto Daprà's crash also caused a break after the restart, the stage had to be cancelled. The rest of the drivers were given alternative times.

The third Saturday's SS Semetín was a bit calmer. Filip Mareš was unlucky again, as he lost time in the bushes and damaged the rear part of his car. Estonian Torn also left the track at the same place. He wanted to catch up the lost time quickly. But after barely 200 metres he flipped the car over on side and the race was over for him too. Kristensson from Sweden also crashed with his Hyundai i20 R5.

In the end, Jan Kopecký took his third SS victory with a time of 6:38.3 minutes, with Erik Cais' Ford Fiesta R5 MkII 2.3 seconds behind. The third fastest time was set by Dominik Stříteský.

After a wild first part of Saturday's leg, Václav Pech with his Ford Focus WRC is leading the competition, but he competes only in the Czech championship. Jan Kopecký, who is 0.9 seconds slower than Pech, leads the European standings, with Erik Cais second, just ahead of Adam Březík. The overall classification may still change after the fifth stage, when the times of the first passes will be altered for the individual crews.

In the 2WD category, Laurent Pellier from France is leading with his Opel Corsa Rally4. He is followed by the home crew Tarabus, Trunkat with Peugeot 208 Rally4. His loss is 36.3 seconds. The Italian Mabellini with Renault Clio Rally4 is another 5.2 seconds behind.

### Standings after the 4th stage (ERC European Rally Championship):

1. Kopecký, Hloušek (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2)	36:04,0 min
2. Cais, Těšínský (CZE, Ford Fiesta R5 MkII)	+ 28,4 s
3. A. Březík, Krajča (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 30,0 s
4. Stříteský, Hovorka (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 35,6 s
5. Csomós, Nagy (HUN, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 36,5 s
6. S. Wagner, Winter (AUT, Škoda Fabia Rally2)	+ 40,6 s
7. Mareš, Bucha (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 42,2 s
8. Astier, Vauclare (FRA, Alpine A110 RGT), 1. místo RGT	+ 1:45,0 min
9. Pardo, Pérez (ESP, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 1:53,3 min
10. Campedelli, Canton (ITA, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 1:55,3 min

20. Pellier, Pelamourgues (FRA, Opel Corsa Rally4), 1<sup>st</sup> in ERC4J cat. + 3:08,3 min  
34. Widlak, Dymurski (POL, Ford Fiesta Rally3), 1<sup>st</sup> in ERC3 cat. + 5:39,1 min

**SS Winners:** 3 – Kopecký, 1 - Csomós

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