

PRESS RELEASE no. 35

Flash info from the leading drivers after the first leg

Saturday's Leg 1 of this year's Barum Czech Rally Zlín 2022 is history now. After a tricky morning section, which was significantly affected by the weather, the drivers took the Březová, Držková and Semetín stages for the second time in the afternoon. Jan Kopecký was again the best driver, keeping a lead of 34.6 seconds over second-placed Erik Cais, and over another Czech driver Dominik Stříteský with a 46.6-second deficit to Kopecký, putting him on the third place.

Jan Kopecký (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 4):

"The afternoon stages were dry apart from the forest parts, but this was even more tricky as it was switching between dry spots and slippery curves full of mud. Such extreme differences in grip are never good, fortunately we were always able to keep the car under control."

Simon Wagner (AUT, Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 11):

"It could have been better of course, but we are not disappointed. The other drivers know this event very well. But I think we can be proud of our result."

Filip Mareš (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 12):

"We hit a bale of straw with the wing, but unlike the morning, it didn't cost us any time and we avoided any mistakes that would have cost us time."

Erik Cais (CZE, Ford Fiesta R5 MkII, starting number 6):

"Compared to the morning, it was better in the afternoon, we changed the set-up of the car and it worked on the hard tyres. Overall, I enjoyed today and I'm glad we finished because the conditions were not easy at all."

Adam Březík (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5, starting number 14):

"On the second SS Březová, the tape on the hose broke, so we got six minutes, and that's it."

Alberto Battistolli (ITA, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 5):

"We survived the day, so we're happy. As I said before, I didn't try to do anything more than in the morning. Also, taking the stage where Efrén Llarena crashed was quite a surprise as we had to rework the schedule. Otherwise we are here and happy. We'll enjoy a good night's sleep and do the same tomorrow, survive."

Norbert Herczig (HUN, Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 9):

"We felt very good. The second section was much cleaner from our side, we chose the right tyres. The long Držková section was very tricky, as was Semetín, as the forest parts were still extremely slippery. I was too cautious sometimes, but here we are, in fifth position overall, which is absolutely great for us."

Javier Pardo (ESP, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 3):

"The afternoon section can be called a complete disaster, we lost all chances for a good placing, just because of my mistake. I can't even express how I feel. Anyway, tomorrow will be different, we have to increase the insurance on the car tonight, because we will go up to the limits, Kopecký should be worried."

Simone Campedelli (ITA, Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 7):

"Our target was the top five, which is not that far away at the moment. Unfortunately, we can't compete with the guys in the front, but we knew from the beginning that we have to stay humble as this is our first time here. It is very important to avoid mistakes, we are not going to the limit because it could very easily get out of control. Tomorrow we want to continue with the set pace."

Martin László (HUN, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 17):

"We've had a very challenging first day, so I'm happy to be here. We're still learning with the car and I think it's improving with every kilometre, so we'll see what progress can we make tomorrow."

Albert von Thurn und Taxis (DEU, Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 15):

"It was very challenging again. The grip was very good at some parts and I had to work hard to chase some time. But at the same time there were places where there was no grip, which surprised me a lot, especially on the seventh stage. With every little crisis we lose a little bit of confidence, and also a little bit of speed, so I'm not completely happy with our performance. Anyway, I'm happy to be here and without any problems. It was a crazy competition today, it tested me a lot and also taught me a lot."

Martin Vlček (CZE, Hyundai i20 R5, starting number 16):

"It's all spread out over a long time, so the results are coming slowly, so it's hard to say how we're actually doing. The race itself was fine. We just want to successfully finish because it's very tough and the Europeans look like they're going to beat themselves up. We're working on some minor things on the car, but it's nothing that will affect our speed."

Emmanuel Guigou (FRA, Alpine A110 RGT, starting number 19):

"It wasn't bad. It was very difficult with the tyres this morning as I chose dry tyres, which wasn't the best choice. In the afternoon it was better, we pushed hard and ended up second in class. Tomorrow we will keep pushing and see what we can get out of it."

Raphaël Astier (FRA, Alpine A110 RGT, starting number 20):

"It's been a good day for me and my co-driver, the car suits me and I have a good feeling about it. But the afternoon was also difficult, there are still a lot of wet spots in the forests."

Jakub Jirovec (CZE, Alpine A110 RGT, starting number 21):

"It was much better now. It was dry, so I felt more comfortable on the dry surface. I think we did a good time at Březová and it's a much better sport for us when it's dry. I don't feel good in the wet and the fact that it got drier helped us. We still don't have the pace of the fast French so we're doing our own thing, but it's better."

Martin Rada (CZE, Fiat 124 Abarth RGT, starting number 22):

"It's great, we enjoyed it a lot. We had the right tyres and we enjoyed the traditional Barum rally. I'm very happy, we managed to get back in front of the second Abarth, but most importantly it was running without breaks. In the morning it wasn't good on the dry tyres in the wet, now it was great and we're happy to be here to finish the day."

Igor Widłak (POL, Ford Fiesta Rally3, starting number 24):

"I am very happy. It's a very tough competition. We are not fast enough, but this is only my sixth asphalt event, so I have to be happy with our performance. The young guys in ERC4 are crazy sometimes. They have unbelievable pace. We're happy to be here at all. We've had different tyres and set-ups so we've been testing and it's really good."

Laurent Pellier (FRA, Opel Corsa Rally4, starting number 25):

"I have good feelings. It was a great day for us. We chose the right footwear in the morning and it was easier for us. There's a lot of mud on the roads and it's still very difficult here in Zlín. It's still a long way to the finish and we'll see tomorrow."

Óscar Palomo (ESP, Peugeot 208 Rally4, starting number 26):

"It was good, except for the parts in the forest the track wasn't so wet. We had a small crisis on Držková, we hit something by the rear of the car. Anyway, I'm enjoying it here, this event is great and I'm looking forward to tomorrow."

Andrea Mabellini (ITA, Renault Clio Rally4, starting number 27):

"The first part of the day was not good at all, but now in the evening we have improved. We were closer to Pellier. It's important for us to know that the pace was good. Tomorrow looks like similar weather, so we'll see."

Toni Herranen (FIN, Ford Fiesta Rally4, starting number 28):

"A very difficult day. There was a lot of dirt on the track in the second section, so it wasn't so easy, but we are here and we will continue tomorrow. We want to complete the competition and get valuable experience from this event."

Dominik Stříteský (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5, starting number 46):

"Good for us. The pace was fast. We got a slow puncture at the second Semetín, but we are happy with the high starting number and belonging to the front top where

guys are really fast. I don't know about Václav Pech, maybe we'll drop one place, but I guess we can be fourth in the Czech Championship, which we're happy about."

Michal Horák (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5, starting number 48):

"On the fourth special stage I tried to pull the handbrake, which caused a problem in the spectator area, where I spun. The engine didn't start, unfortunately we lost fifteen or twenty seconds. On the fifth stage we got a red flag after two kilometres and it's very torn. Our car cooled down at the start, so it was tough."

Aleš Jirasek (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5, starting number 49):

"We are happy being in the service. I drove carefully, I adjusted everything not to make a mistake, and didn't end up somewhere. We intentionally drive such pace to get to the finish line. We were longer in one switchback, but nothing dramatic and the times are quite promising. It's our first time at Barum rally, so we're happy. We're moving forward, now if I'm not mistaken we're 13th and sixth in the MCR, which we're taking very positively, so above expectations."

Jaromír Tarabus (CZE, Peugeot 208 Rally4, starting number 50):

"We're not too happy, we did two special stages again. One of them was a short ride, then we got a red flag and had to go slow. But it doesn't matter, there was a bad crash, the main thing is that the guys were okay. Anyway, we got half of today's times allocated from the table, I don't think that's right, but that's the way it is. We had a slightly harder assortment at Semetín than in the morning, so it was more slippery in the woods, but otherwise good. We're here and we're definitely a better Barum rally than last year."

Antonín Tlust'ák (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo, starting number 51):

"Feelings are good, it's a pity that we didn't take off even once at Troják. Last year both passes were cancelled, this year the same, which is a quarter of the race. It's a shame, of course I understand that, but we are here and the conditions are extremely difficult. We have a trio of difficult stages tomorrow, so it's going to be very interesting again."

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