

PRESS RELEASE no. 46

Jan Kopecký has won tenth Barum rally, Mareš is second, Wagner third

Nothing new, no surprises. The 51st Barum Czech Rally Zlín was won by Agrotec Škoda Rally Team driver Jan Kopecký in his Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo with co-driver Jan Hloušek. The forty-year-old competition driver triumphed at the Zlín rally for the eleventh time, including the tenth time in the European Championship. It was also Kopecký's seventh victory in a row and he celebrates his ninth Czech title ahead of schedule.

Kopecký dominated the competition right from the beginning. He set the fastest time in qualification and also took first place on Friday evening in the night Super Special stage. On Saturday, he won the third, fourth and fifth stages and built up a 32-second lead. Kopecký was particularly successful in the first Držková, where he won by 18.4 seconds over Mareš. The successful driver from Kostelec nad Orlicí did not let his lead go. Although he did not win one of the six SS on Sunday, he kept his first position and reached the finish with a 37.5 second lead. Overall, he completed the 202.51 km rally in 1:59:27.6 hours.

"Eleventh victory, but still not tired. It's been about twenty years since the first one, but I still enjoy winning at Barum rally. It was a tough weekend because of the very tricky weather, we were constantly watching different weather apps, radars. We only had sixteen tyres for the event, we had to fit them thoughtfully. Sometimes it worked out, sometimes it didn't, but we are here," smiled champion Jan Kopecký at the press conference after the end of the demanding Barum rally.

The crew of Filip Mareš, Radovan Bucha finished second. Their Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo from Entry Engineering - ATT Investments was fighting until the last meter for the best possible position. Before the start of the final SS Pindula, the difference between second and fifth place was very close, but in the end, the Czech crew managed to get right behind Kopecký. **"A win would have been sweeter for us, but this year it is already taken. We have to try next time. If we don't make mistakes like this year, we will be closer to first place than this year,"** Mareš recalled his three side trips that cost him tens of seconds.

"I like the overall character of the tracks every year. It was hard to prepare for the conditions this weekend. Many times we didn't even know what to expect at the start of a stage. Until we passed the finish, we didn't know if we had put on good tyres or not. Especially on the water it was really challenging. For example, it's a pity that the second pass at Bunč was cancelled, we were prepared for that big risk," said the thirty-one year old driver towards the extremely wet SS11, which was cancelled before their pass.

"If we run that one, it would be interesting. There are places where you have to go through in the rain, the chances of an accident are probably more than one to one. But otherwise it would be a very attractive duel," smiled Filip Mareš.

The third position was finally taken by the Austrian crew Simon Wagner, Gerald Winter from Eurosol RTH. They got off the track on the last SS and were close to an accident, but in the end they saw the finish line of the Barum rally, moreover on the podium. At the finish of SS13, Wagner spoke about the fact that after such a mistake they were definitely without a chance of finishing in the TOP3. **"It turned out very well. It's a beautiful race here every year, we enjoyed it,"** said the twenty-nine-year-old driver at the finish line in a crowded square.

Erik Cais was out of any luck on the last SS, just like last year. This year he didn't crash, but had a puncture and finished fourth. The twenty-three year old driver was very disappointed at the finish. **"I wanted to stand on the box in front of the crowd. I apologize to the spectators, to the team..."** Cais was mumbling the words at the Pindula finish line.

Final Standings of Barum Czech Rally Zlín 2022: - European Rally Championship (ERC) standings:

1. Kopecký, Hloušek (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	1:59:27,6 hod
2. Mareš, Bucha (CZE, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 37,5 s
3. S. Wagner, Winter (AUT, Škoda Fabia Rally2)	+ 39,3 s
4. Cais, Těšínský (CZE, Ford Fiesta R5 MkII)	+ 46,3 s
5. Stříteský, Hovorka (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 56,5 s
6. Herczig, Ferencz (HUN, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 3:43,0 min
7. Campedelli, Canton (ITA, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 4:07,3 min
8. László, Berendi (HUN, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 6:21,3 min
9. von Thurn und Taxis, Ettl (DEU/AUT, Škoda Fabia Rally2 Evo)	+ 6:28,1 min
10. A. Březík, Krajča (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 6:55,0 min

12. Astier, Vauclare (FRA, Alpine A110 RGT), 1. místo RGT	+ 11:08,2 min
15. Pellier, Pelamourgues (FRA, Opel Corsa Rally4), 1. místo ERC4J	+ 11:08,2 min
26. Widlak, Dymurski (POL, Ford Fiesta Rally3), 1. místo ERC3	+ 17:54,4 min

SS Winners:

5 – Kopecký, 1 – Csomós, Cais, Stříteský, Mareš, Torn, S. Wagner, A. Březík.
SS 11 Bunč was cancelled.

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