

PRESS RELEASE No. 28

116 crews from 19 countries to start the 54th Barum Czech Rally

The regional city of Zlín has welcomed the best of European motorsport again. The elite of the FIA ERC championship has come to the southeast of Moravia in recent days, competing with the domestic top teams for valuable points on specific regional tracks. The teams have already completed events with fans and technical inspections. This year, a total of 116 competing crews out of 126 originally registered have arrived. Among the leading drivers who have excused with the organizers are Norwegian Mads Østberg, Briton Max McRay, and Pole Jaroslaw Kołtun.

Traditionally, domestic drivers will be among the biggest favorites of this year's Barum rally. Eleven-time winner Jan Kopecký and last year's winner Dominik Střítecký will be at the start. Austrian Simon Wagner, who has always been on the podium in the past three years, will try to win for the third time in the current season of the Czech championship. The pair fighting for the European champion title – Pole Miko Marczyk and Italian Andrea Mabellini – will not want to be left behind either.

Another driver involved in the fight for the continental championship, Norwegian Mads Østberg, will, however, be absent from the Barum Rally, just like last year. He apologized to the organizers due to the health condition of his co-driver Lucas Karlsson. His teammate Max McRay, who was also on the original starting list with a Citroën C3 Rally2, will not be coming either.

Other crews from the European field who have apologized include Jaroslaw Kołtun from Poland and Irish driver Aoife Raftery. The change then occurred in the crew of starting number 8. Instead of the originally registered Frenchman Stéphane Lefebvre in the Toyota Yaris GR Rally2, the silver medalist of the 2023 edition, Hungarian Miklós Csómos, will appear in Zlín with the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2.

"I am glad that we managed to agree on the start in Zlín. I have very good memories of this competition and I believe that we will build on the performance from 2023, when we finished on the podium for the first time in the European Championship," smiled the 32-year-old Csómos after Friday's qualifying stage.

Partial changes then took place in crew no. 27, where the experienced Hungarian Zoltán László will be joined by co-driver Richárd Csáki, as well as the favorite of the Junior European Championship Calle Carlberg, who will be navigated on the challenging Zlín tracks by his father Torbjörn.

The 54th Barum Czech Rally Zlín will start on Friday afternoon, when the crews will drive through the starting ramp on Zlín's Náměstí Míru Square as part of a ceremonial ceremony. The first measured kilometers will then be driven in the evening as part of a traditional spectator special stage in the streets of the regional capital. During the weekend, competitors will face a demanding portion of 207 tough kilometers, spread over thirteen special stages. The winner will be announced

on Sunday afternoon, when the competition will culminate in the final Power Stage on the legendary section around Kateřinice.

The following crews have apologised to the organisers:

3 Mads Østberg, Lucas Karlsson (NOR/SWE, Citroën C3 Rally2)
11 Max McRae, Cameron Fair (GBR, Citroën C3 Rally2)
23 Jaroslav Koltun, Ireneusz Pleskot (POL, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)
41 Aoife Raftery, Hannah McKillop (IRL, Peugeot 208 Rally4)

95 Veronika Kožmínová, Jiří Kalkus (CZE, Opel Corsa Rally4)
105 Vlastimil Zigo, Jan Tvrdý (CZE, Škoda Felicia)

Other changes to the starting list:

8 Miklós Csómos, Kristián Kertész (HUN, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) – crew change instead of the originally registered crew Stéphane Lefebvre, Andy Malfoy (FRA, Toyota Yaris GR Rally2)

27 Zoltán László, Richárd Csáki (HUN, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) – co-driver change
37 Calle Carlberg, Torbjörn Carlberg (SWE, Opel Corsa Rally4) – co-driver change

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Vojtěch Gargulák
Media centre
Barum Czech Rally Zlín

