

PRESS RELEASE no. 30

Feedback from the leading crews after the qualifying stage

The first sharp kilometres within the **53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024** have been completed by the crews competing in the European Championship with ERC1 priority. On Friday morning they completed the qualifying stage in Oldřichovice, which decided the starting order for Saturday's leg. Czech winner of the stage, Erik Cais, will be the first to hit the Saturday's stage. He was eight tenths of a second faster than second placed Austrian Simon Wagner. The third place went to the Polish pilot Miko Marczyk. We asked the leading crews about their fresh impressions after reaching the closed parking lot in Otrokovice.

Hayden Paddon (NZL, Hyundai i20 N Rally2, starting number 1):

"Last year didn't end up the way we imagined, but the experience we gained can help us a lot this year to be better prepared for this unique competition. A lot will depend on the weather. We'll see what comes."

Mathieu Franceschi (FRA, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 4):

"Feelings are good, it's an interesting qualification. The first part is like a urban stage, which I'm not very good at, but we have a good time. Tomorrow will be interesting, it should be cooler and there are some gravel sections. We came for the best result."

Miko Marczyk (POL, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 7):

"I am satisfied, compared to the competition in Rome I am going at a good pace. The starting position for tomorrow is important because the weather can change very quickly. I'm also looking forward to the city circuit in the evening."

Andrea Mabellini (ITA, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 8):

"I am very happy to be back in Zlín. The evening stage will be fun. In qualifying I made a small mistake at the beginning, there's a bit of dirt and it's slippery. I lost some time there, but it's just qualifying and the important thing is to manage the whole event."

Jon Armstrong (IRL, Ford Fiesta Rally2 MKII, starting number 9):

"Honestly, it was not bad, we had a good ride. We still have to improve a bit for the competition itself, but I think the conditions will be a bit different tomorrow. The pace is still not ideal, so we have to figure out where to speed up."

Efrén Llarena (ESP, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 2):

"We are happy. We struggled a bit during free practice, we couldn't get into the right pace. But we made a few changes to the car's settings and now it seems good."

Simon Wagner (AUT, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 10):

"I was hoping that a few more drivers would be faster so that we could have a better starting position tomorrow. Anyway, I have a good feeling about the driving as well as the car, we enjoyed qualifying and we are ready for the start."

Erik Cais (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 11):

"I'm of course excited, we'll see if the first position at the start will be an advantage or a disadvantage. Hopefully, given the weather, it will rather help us."

Filip Mareš (CZE, Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, starting number 12):

"I'm glad it has already started, I've been here since Monday and it's been quite a long week. Now the days are finally here when we'll be sitting in the racing car. We enjoyed qualifying, there were no problems during that so we're going to get ready for the real racing which starts tonight."

Martin László (HUN, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 14):

"I made a small mistake at the first junction, but otherwise the car works great."

Dominik Stříteský (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 15):

"We enjoyed it, it was such a nice start before the evening urban stage. We're happy with the position, we didn't want to be at the very front because tomorrow is a one big question mark. The trophies aren't handed out until Sunday and we're looking forward to kicking things off."

Jan Kopecký (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 16):

"We are eighth, which is not ideal, but on the other hand, if tomorrow's Bunč is dry, it might work for us on the gravel. We'll see what the weather will be like, it will all depend on that."

Adam Březík (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 17):

"It could have been better, on the other hand, the ninth starting position could be a certain advantage tomorrow, especially for the gravel part on Bunč. However, rain can come as well, it's been so unpredictable all the week and the forecasts change a lot, so anything can happen. If it rains, we will be at a slight disadvantage."

Václav Pech (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5, starting number 18):

"It was good for the first sharp kilometres in this car, to be honest I expected worse. I'm learning with every corner, it wasn't the ideal drive I would have imagined, but within the framework of driving the Fabia for the first time, I'm happy."

Albert von Thurn und Taxis (GER, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 24):

"I can't wait for the competition to start, I'm really looking forward to it. The car is working great, I made a small mistake in qualifying and lost a little time, but I think it's not that important considering my starting position. I'm just happy to be here again."

More information available at www.czechrally.com and don't forget to follow the Barum rally on the official Facebook, Instagram, and X accounts as well as the other press information.

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