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BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN

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Barum rally officially launched on the square in front of the city hall!

The Zlín region came alive with motorsport after a year again. A ceremony on the regional town's square on Friday afternoon kicked off the **53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024**, which once again attracted tens of thousands of visitors to southeast Moravia. Most of them will not miss the evening race in the streets of Zlín, accompanying by the stormy atmosphere during the popular urban super special stage. And just a look at the start list suggests that there will definitely be plenty to watch this year as well.

The program at Náměstí Míru square in Zlín started in the afternoon by announcing the winners of the supporting event competitions, including the virtual Barum rally, which took place in the past weeks. Afterwards, the Mayor of Zlín Jiří Korec, the Governor of the Zlín Region Radim Holíš and the Managing Director of the main partner Continental Barum s.r.o. Libor Láznicka came to greet the hundreds of attending fans.

The first racing car passed the starting ramp after 4 pm. Behind its wheel sat the defending European Champion Hayden Paddon from New Zealand, who visited Bata's city for the second time. **"It is great to be back in the Czech Republic again. We enjoyed last year's event very much, it was a very challenging competition, which may be even more challenging this year due to the changeable weather,"** the thirty-seven-year-old driver recalled the contradictory weekend forecast. **"We just want to finish the race with as many points as possible. Mathieu will be fast for sure, he's done a fantastic job this year so we have to do our best,"** said Paddon mentioning his closest rival in the battle for this year's European championship.

The French youngster Mathieu Francheschi, behind the wheel of the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, will also have very high goals in Zlín. **"I hope that we can enjoy this demanding competition and avoid all the problems that may arise. I'm really looking forward to the start though, I think the atmosphere will be amazing again,"** smiled the 25-year-old Frenchman on the start ramp.

However, the big challengers to Europe's rally leaders will also be the local stars who regularly take the top positions at Barum rally. The biggest one is, of course, Jan Kopecký, who enjoyed his eighth consecutive victory in Zlín last year. **"I expect a perfect race. I believe that the guys from Europe have a lot of experience with the Barum rally and will challenge us. But there are also local young guys being motivated a lot, just like me wanting to defeat Roman Kresta when I was at their age. I know how much they will strive for it, but we will do our best to stop them,"** said Kopecký, the eleven-time Barum rally winner.

Dominik Střítecký, who has already ruled two Czech Republic Championship events this year and dominates the standings before the Barum rally, will be one of the locals aiming to win in Zlín. **"The whole season is very balanced and I expect it to be the same here. Moreover, the European guys will also fight for points, so I think we have a lot to look forward to and we will all enjoy it,"** nodded the current leader of the national championship.

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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INFORMATION



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