

## PRESS RELEASE no. 34

### 5th SS: Stříteský takes the lead, Cais cuts the loss

Competing crews of the **53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024** have completed five special stages. After Friday's urban special stage, the event continued with Saturday's morning section, which included a total of four special stages on the sections Březová, Kateřinice, Rajnochovice and Bunč. The last-mentioned special stage caused problems to many of the leading drivers, namely the defending champion, Czech driver Jan Kopecký, taking more than two minutes deficit after changing a puncture right on the track. Adam Březík from the Czech Republic or Efrén Llarena from Spain had problems too. At the top of the standings appears Dominik Stříteský with a ten-second lead over Erik Cais (all in Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 cars), who is now cutting his loss caused by Friday's penalty.

The home driver Adam Březík stepped into the tropical August Saturday the best, dominating the Březová stage and taking the overall lead of the competition for a while. This lasted also after the first passage through Kateřinice, but the following stage Rajnochovice changed the standings significantly. It was the puncture that took Březík down after being off the track at the very end, after which the Samohýl Škoda Team driver picked up a thirteen-second deficit and dropped to the third place.

After that Dominik Stříteský took the lead, having avoided problems on the tricky Bunč, and in the second leg he will defend himself against the attacks of his rivals. The closest one so far is Erik Cais, who after a 20-second penalty on Friday caused by a late arrival to the time check set a strong pace and won three stages on Saturday morning. The fastest foreign crew so far is the Austrian-German duo of Simon Wagner and Jara Hain, who are third overall, sixteen seconds behind the leader.

Several crews have already encountered complications on the track during the first section on Saturday. The aforementioned Březík, after a puncture in Rajnochovice, experienced another crisis at Bunč, where he briefly flew off the track in the gravel section, yet he is still within reach of the elite three. Spain's Efrén Llarena also slightly damaged his Fabia RS Rally2, but still continues. Unfortunately, the same is not true for Belgian Amaur Molle, who crashed at Rajnochovice. Ireland's Jon Armstrong (Ford Fiesta Rally2 MkII) got two punctures on the same stage, but had to quit the competition because he only brought one spare. The eleven-time winner of the Barum rally Jan Kopecký, also had tyre problems, having changed a punctured tyre right on the Bunč track causing a two-minute loss, which significantly complicated his path to his ninth triumph in a row. Czech driver Jakub Jírovec (Toyota GR Yaris Rally2) and Kerem Kazaz from Turkey (Ford Fiesta Rally3) finished off the track at Bunč.

### Standings after the 5th special stage

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Stříteský, Hovorka (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)  | 36:19,5 min |
| 2. Cais, Bacigál (CZE/SVK, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)   | + 10,1 s    |
| 3. S. Wagner, Hain (AUT/DEU, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) | + 16,8 s    |
| 4. A. Březík, Krajča (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)   | + 28,9 s    |
| 5. Franceschi, Malfoy (FRA, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)  | + 29,0 s    |



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| 6. Mareš, Bucha (CZE, Toyota GR Yaris Rally2)                        | + 29,3 s     |
| 7. Paddon, Kennard (NZL, Hyundai i20 N Rally2)                       | + 38,7 s     |
| 8. Llarena, Fernández (ESP, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)                   | + 45,2 s     |
| 9. Neubauer, Ettl (AUT, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)                       | + 48,9 s     |
| 10. Marczyk, Gospodarczyk (POL, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)               | + 53,5 s     |
| 22. Kowalczyk, Hryniuk (POL, Renault Clio Rally3), 1. místo ERC3     | + 3:23,5 min |
| 30. P. Herczig, Varga (HUN, Peugeot 208 Rally4), 1. místo ERC4 a 2WD | + 4:11,0 min |

## SS victories:

3 – Cais, 1 – S. Wagner, A. Březík

More information available at [www.czechrally.com](http://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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