

PRESS RELEASE no. 37

Feedback from the leading crews after Saturday leg

Saturday's leg of the **53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024** has gone. And just like in the past years, it offered many dramatic moments, which were further intensified by the rainy weather that prevailed over the Zlín region in the afternoon. In the end, just eight special stages were completed, as the second passage at Bunč was cancelled for safety reasons. The crews got to the service zone in Otrokovice earlier than expected. The drivers told us their fresh impressions of the first leg.

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

"It was great at the beginning, but then we made a bad decision, which cost us a valuable time. Tomorrow is gonna be difficult. "

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

"It was certainly not easy, the conditions were tricky. Being second on the track in the wet Rajnochovice was a really big adventure, but we made it. Carrying two rain tires was the right strategy and in the end we are happy with our second place. It might rain overnight, so it will be challenging again tomorrow. We'll see, we'll never give up."

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

"It wasn't bad. We definitely sped up after the problems in the morning section. We set a good time during the second pass of Rajnochovice, but it was crazy, messy and slippery. Then Bunč was cancelled, I saw some shots, it wasn't very safe. If something had happened, I don't know how the rescuers would have got there. In the end we are eighth and the fight for better positions is open."

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

"My feelings are mixed, it was really tough and I'm glad we made it through without any major mistakes. A lot of people had problems, even we didn't choose our tires and setup perfectly, but that's the way it is. For how bad I feel about my performance, we're still in touch in the battle for the trophy, which is not bad at all."

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

"It was difficult, but we did our best. Even though we had two rain tires, we were sliding a lot. In these conditions they had to cancel Bunč. I think they should have cancelled Rajnochovice as well. Yes, you can go slowly, but even if you drive like an old woman, you can have an accident."

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

"We are satisfied, it was a really long day. Especially the eighth stage was crazy, huge rain, smooth black asphalt everywhere, absolutely no grip, lots of aquaplaning. We were just trying to survive and finish. We managed to do that, we're sixth. Tomorrow it's going to be a good fight for the podium, which we didn't expect at Barum rally because it's a tough event and the home drivers are extremely fast. It's great."

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

"It went great, we won the leg, which we are very happy about given the conditions. It was very hot and dry in the morning and we had rain at the end. It wasn't nice, but we did well."

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

"We chose the right tires for the second section, the car worked great. Unfortunately I overdid it at one point, and flew into a meadow, broke the front disc and lost another forty seconds. Today didn't go well at all, but I'm happy with how well the car is working."

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

"It could have been better for sure, we made a lot of mistakes and wasted a lot of time, so we're not happy. There were no crises, but unfortunately there were a few stupid mistakes. Tomorrow we have to start hard and accelerate progressively."

Hermann Neubauer (AUT, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, starting number 25):

"I have experienced a lot, but this is something completely new for me. The forecast was for a bit of rain on the last stage. We took six slicks, no wet tires. And then we were standing in front of Rajnochovice and it started to rain like in a rainforest. I've never seen anything like it before. I'm happy with the time we did, though. But I could have definitely used better tires."

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

"We got two punctures on the eighth stage. I took the cut with the same trail as in the morning, but unfortunately this time the left front tire didn't make it. Then the second puncture came and we had to stop and change it. It was a kind of a disaster. But we knew it would be tough. We'll see what happens tomorrow, maybe there will be a chance to get some points."

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

"The fact that the last stage was cancelled is the best news of the day for us. It was not an easy day at all, also with the weather. We didn't have any wet tires, so it was more of a fight for survival in Rajnochovice. We are really happy to be here, though. There's one more day of racing ahead, if it's dry we'll try to speed up. I haven't driven this car much in the wet, so it would be difficult."

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

"We lost two minutes this morning because we had a puncture on the first Bunč. We went into the second section on hard dry tyres and it started to rain heavily. At Rajnochovice we were just trying to save ourselves and come out unscathed. In such conditions it's just not a proper rally - driving in such wet conditions with the wrong tires. We lost a lot, but that's life. We're in the middle of nowhere now, so we'll try to enjoy it more tomorrow. We'll see what new experience we can get."

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

"I didn't sleep much last night and I was quite tired during the first section. I didn't feel well. I slept for a while during the afternoon service, but that wasn't the best decision because we didn't get to the wet tires during that. Just as we were leaving the service, I had a strange feeling. When I looked up at the sky, I saw a black cloud in the exact direction we were going. It was an interesting



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experience, the track is very tricky and slippery even dry and it wasn't pleasant on slicks. I didn't push at all, there was standing water, so we drove carefully. I'm not very happy with the times, but we are more or less in the same position, only Aleš skipped us, who set a good time in the wet. Now we'll have a beer and see what tomorrow brings."

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

"There were some crisis situations, we were out a couple of times. We are very happy to be here at all. I don't mind at all that Bunč was cancelled because the conditions were not good. The road was not passable, plus the fallen trees are not ideal either, so the decision to cancel it was right."

Filip Kohn (CZE, Ford Fiesta Rally3, starting number 27):

"It was extremely difficult. I expected a lot from the race, but not what happened to us on the stages. In the afternoon we were on slicks on a completely wet track. It was more of a fight for survival than a driving experience. We're at the finish line, which was the main goal. Tomorrow we have to go on and finish the competition. We'll take our pace and see what it takes."

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.

Zlín, 17th August 2024 **Vojtěch GARGHULÁK, David ŠTÍCHA, Martin BILL**
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