

PRESS RELEASE no. 42

Domínik Stříteský replaces Jan Kopecký on the throne of Barum rally

The king is deposed, long live the king! With these words one could end **53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024**. The long-time ruler of the Zlín rally Jan Kopecký, who has won the competition eight times in a row and eleven times in total since 2015, is defeated. The absolute winner was the Czech crew of **Domínik Stříteský, Jiří Hovorka**, who successfully brought their Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 car under the banner of the Auto Podbabská Škoda Mol Team to the finish line with a 19.2-second lead over the Austrian-German crew of Simon Wagner, Jara Hain. After eighteen years, the Barum Rally was once again dominated by a regional driver. The last time it happened was in 2006 when Roman Kresta triumphed. The third position was then taken by the Czech-Slovak crew Erik Cais and Igor Bacigal, being 24 seconds behind the winner.

As always, the Barum rally started with the opening Super SS in the night streets of Zlín. Although it does not decide the competition, it starts it very attractively. On Friday night, it was Austrian Simon Wagner who was fastest. Very important for the further development of the competition was the mistake of the crew Cais, Bacigal, who received a twenty-second penalty due to their late arrival to the time inspection before SS 1.

Erik Cais worked hard to redeem the mistake. On Saturday morning, he dominated three of the four timed sections and moved up to second position (Cais won eight special stages in total). It was the first pass through Bunč that was the game changer for the competition. Eleven-time Barum rally winner Jan Kopecký got a puncture there and a lost more than two and a quarter minutes which irrevocably took away the chance for another laurel.

The second passes through Březová and Kateřinice belonged to Cais again and it seemed that two regional drivers would fight for the first place: Cais was 4.2 seconds behind Stříteský after SS 7. But rain on the second pass through Rajnochovice took away another candidate for the Barum rally trophy. Cais didn't have much chance on dry tires and reached the end of the SS more than forty seconds behind the winner Stříteský. After a well-run stage, Austrian Simon Wagner settled into second position. The second run through Bunč was cancelled for safety reasons due to bad weather and Stříteský overnighted in the leading position with a comfortable 21.1 second lead.

During Sunday, the native of Kelč maintained his lead with a bit of luck. Although Stříteský did not win the stages, he was able to maintain a lead of more than twenty seconds over Wagner. On the two opening stages of Sunday's leg, he reached the finish with slow punctures. The end of SS 13 also brought excitement, where Stříteský's car hit the clock at the very end, but the twenty-four-year-old Czech championship leader managed to pass through the finishing photocell.

The leading driver was also successful on the second pass of SS Pindula with a 25.1 second lead over Wagner, while a big fight was still expected for the other places. Thanks to further victories at Halenkovice and Pindula, setting 5.2 seconds better result than his competitor, Cais was able to move into third position ahead of Březík. Perhaps he could have even looked at second place.

Everything was decided on the final Power Stage Halenkovice. Stříteský calmly reached the finish of the last stage and confirmed his triumph at this year's Barum rally. The second position was defended by Wagner, while Cais, despite winning the last stage, finished third with a loss of 4.8 seconds for the silver position. In the end, Březík finished fourth and Kopecký finished ninth.

The ERC3 category belonged to the Czech-British crew of Filip Kohn, Tom Woodburn, who won by half a minute ahead of Kerem Kazaz from Turkey (both Ford Fiesta Rally3). The ERC4 category was dominated

by the Hungarians Patrik Herczig and Kristóf Varga in Peugeot 208 Rally4, who were 48.1 seconds faster than the Czech crew of Daniel Polášek, Zdeněk Omelka in the same car. Herczig was also the fastest among 2WDs.

Final standings of 53rd BARUM CZECH RALLY ZLÍN 2024

1. Stříteský, Hovorka (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	1:41:56,7 hod
2. S. Wagner, Hain (AUT/DEU, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 19,2 s
3. Cais, Bacigál (CZE/SVK, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 24,0 s
4. A. Březík, Krajča (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 37,9 s
5. Mareš, Bucha (CZE, Toyota GR Yaris Rally2)	+ 41,6 s
6. Llarena, Fernández (ESP, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 1:22,3 min
7. Marczyk, Gospodarczyk (POL, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 1:58,4 min
8. Neubauer, Ettl (AUT, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 2:21,4 min
9. Kopecký, Hloušek (CZE, Škoda Fabia RS Rally2)	+ 2:31,0 min
10. Pech, Uhel (CZE, Škoda Fabia R5)	+ 3:15,3 min
20. Kohn, Woodburn (CZE/GBR, Ford Fiesta Rally3), 1st in ERC3	+ 11:20,1 min
25. P. Herczig, Varga (HUN, Peugeot 208 Rally4), 1st in ERC4 and 2WD	+ 12:54,8 min

SS victories:

8 – Cais, 3 – A. Březík, 2 – S. Wagner, Mareš, 1 – Stříteský.

Note: SS 6 was won by Cais and Březík with the same time, on SS 14 Cais and Mareš were the fastest. SS 8 was cancelled for safety reasons.

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