

4 May 2017 – no. 4 – 2017 ADAC Rallye Deutschland

“ADAC Rallye Deutschland More Spectacular than Ever”

- Clerk of the Course Friedhelm Kissel speaks about the status of preparations in an interview
- Kissel on the highlights of this year’s German FIA WRC rally

Munich. A great number of new challenges will be awaiting the world’s best rally drivers when they hit the Saarland for the 2017 ADAC Rallye Deutschland in late August (17 to 20 August 2017). But this year’s German stint in the FIA World Rally Championship will not be a particularly challenging task for Sébastien Ogier and the other WRC top drivers alone. The organisers themselves, under the direction of the new Clerk of the Course Friedhelm Kissel, are busy almost non-stop to progress their preparations. Kissel, the Head of Sport Division at ADAC Pfalz e.V., acted as Clerk of the Course for the ADAC Rallye Deutschland between 1993 and 2002. In an interview, he spoke about the highlights of the 2017 rally, the special challenges for the planners and what is different from his first “tour of duty”, when the rally was on the schedule of the European Rally Championship.

Mr Kissel, how are your preparations coming along?

Outstandingly well! Even considering the new circumstances, we are on schedule in every respect. This is owing primarily to the fact that all parties involved – first and foremost the officials from the Saarland and the Rhineland-Palatinate and the colleagues from all over Germany and the ADAC head office in Munich no less – work together very well. The ADAC Rallye Deutschland has always been a great collective effort to which all 18 ADAC regional clubs have contributed their share. I am very pleased that we all act in concert.

The ADAC Rallye Deutschland is moving to the Saarland in 2017. What are the special challenges this presents to you and your planning staff?

We always aim to take the ADAC Rallye Deutschland to new levels every year. By moving to the Saarland, we will be doing just this in several respects. First of all, this year’s rally will have a more compact event. It will be a rally of shorter distances and transport stages. Then there are numerous new settings and locations – from the new Rally Headquarters to the new Service Park to the new Special Stages to downtown Saarbrücken, where we will be starting for the first time. Of course, when you do something for the first time, this means more planning. On the other hand, the more compact format of the itinerary helps us cut some distances also with respect to planning, which is helpful.

In your personal view, what are the most exciting new highlights in 2017?

We have many things on our agenda to offer the visitors at the rally a gripping experience on all four days of the rally. We will kick-off on Thursday with the new start setup in Saarbrücken. Here, the fans will have opportunity to get up close and personal with the drivers during an autograph-signing session and see them in action on the same night: Directly off the show start stage, the drivers will launch into a Super Special Stage, a timed prologue across the urban motorway bridge right next to the Staatstheater playhouse. Another new Super Special Stage will follow on Friday: Wadern-Weiskirchen is a fast loop offering excellent conditions to the spectators. For the Arena Panzerplatte on Saturday, we have a number of surprises for the fans, which understandably I do not wish to comment upon. The final highlight is the finish of the Power Stage directly at the Service Park on Sunday, followed ensuite by the podium ceremony. This is a unique selling proposition, so to say, among all the rallies on the WRC calendar.

What are your hopes for the new Service Park?

The new Service Park is directly on the shore of lake Bostal. Its surroundings and ambience are terrific. The lakeshore is very natural and the whole area is a popular recreation and leisure des-

Press release



ination. During the rally, fans will experience a genuine open-air festival atmosphere. There will be high life, notably on Sunday when the final Power Stage will end directly at the Service Park and we will have the official podium ceremony of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland right afterward. This will be great not only for the fans but for the mechanics and all the team members as well who will be right there to celebrate with the drivers.

Will all the new features change the character of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland?

No. We are very keen on preserving the time-proven and popular course profile of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland. In other words, the event will offer the same typical mix of narrow vineyard roads, tough tracks on the Baumholder military range and fast asphalt tests. The latter category will include some exciting innovations this year, after all we will be in the Saarland. They will make the ADAC Rallye Deutschland more spectacular than ever. As a policy, we will continue to work with these three ingredients in the future and will develop our rally on the basis of this portfolio.

What has changed since your first “tour of duty” as Clerk of the Course of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland? And how has rally-racing as such changed?

Compared to the old days, there have been a lot of positive changes. Back then, the ADAC Rallye Deutschland was “merely” a European Championship rally. Today, we are in a completely different league and have successfully established our rally on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar. What’s more, we have been a top WRC act for a number of years now. That’s great! Rally-racing has also changed a lot. What I am particularly happy about is the great quality and competitiveness of the leading drivers that we see in 2017. Four drivers won in the five WRC rallies to date. The WRC has become very exciting. Last not least this makes the 2017 ADAC Rallye Deutschland all the more attractive. It will add to the suspense if we do not have a single driver set to be champion at the end of August.

What are your plans for the ADAC Rallye Deutschland in the years to come? Are you already thinking of other innovations?

The development of the ADAC Rallye Deutschland is a continuous process. Primarily we aim at making our rally even more spectator-friendly and as safe as we possibly can. As we did in the past, after the rally, we will look at all the new elements closely and analyse: What was popular? Did we meet the expectations? Where is room for improvement? On the basis of this analysis, we will develop new ideas. Maybe we will be able to implement some in the next season, for others we may have to wait until the overall conditions are right. The Power Stage finishing at the Service Park is a very good example: This is an idea that had to wait for the move to Bostalsee to be optimally implemented. With innovations such as this we do not aim to reinvent our rally but we mean to enhance its profile. Diversity and variety combined with high sporting standards will remain the hallmark of any future ADAC Rallye Deutschland.

What tipped the scales in favour of assuming responsibility for the ADAC Rallye Deutschland as its Clerk of the Course once more?

The challenges of the task were extremely tempting. The ADAC Rallye Deutschland has become an international motor sport event with a unique reputation. For me, the move to the Saarland presents many opportunities to actively progress the development of this event. And when I accepted the task, I knew I could count on a strong and experienced team to back me. This made the decision a lot easier for me.

One final question: What is your ultimate tip for the fans at the ADAC Rallye Deutschland? What is the hotspot you believe no fan should miss?

I think I don’t even want to pick a favourite. Each day of the rally has its highlights. And the good thing about this rally is that the proximity of the Special Stages in relation to one another and the centrally located Service Park create even more opportunities for the fans to watch the actions from various spectator areas. My advice to fans is get a Rally Pass for the whole four days. The passes will prove even more valuable than before.

Press release

Get your rally and day passes on pre-sale now!

In addition to the four-day rally passes, the fans can now also buy day passes for Friday, Saturday or Sunday on pre-sale. On the day printed on the pass, passholders get access to all spectator areas along each Special Stage and the ADAC Rallye Deutschland Service Park. In 2017, fans can also buy self-print passes. They serve as proof of purchase to be redeemed for rally passes or day passes at the rally venue. Visit the official ticket shop on the web at www.adac.de/rallye-deutschland (go to the Tickets tab).

Pre-sale buyers will enjoy discounts and attractive packages, including the official ADAC Rallye Deutschland event guide. The same as last year, the pre-sale price of a rally pass package is €70 (€65 for ADAC members). Day passes are available for €35 exclusively on pre-sale.

The rally passes cover:

- Access to all Special Stages on all days
- Access to the Service Park on all days
- Access to the Shakedown on Thursday
- A spectator map providing all the essential information about the rally
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland lanyard
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland sticker
- ADAC Rallye Deutschland event guide

ADAC Rallye Deutschland information:

The ADAC Rallye Deutschland has a unique worldwide reputation. Its mix of hairpin stages in the vineyards, tough tracks on the Baumholder tank range and fast asphalt roads presents extreme challenges for both the teams and the drivers. Excellent driving skills and versatility are of the essence here. Diversity, high-class action and closeness to the fans are the ingredients that make the ADAC Rallye Deutschland such an attractive package for spectators as well. Year after year, this major event draws enthusiastic crowds from all over Europe, giving it a special, international atmosphere.

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