

# Media Information



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## Crucial points at stake for the rally elite at the CER

- **The entire WRC1 elite is set to compete at the Central European Rally**
- **Gripping situation in WRC table promises dramatic sport at penultimate round of world championship**
- **Strong German competitors add plenty of spice in WRC2 and WRC3**

Munich. The list of starters at the second staging of the Central European Rally, from 17th to 20th October, is now official, adding to the anticipation ahead of round 12 of 13 in this season's FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). All the drivers at the top end of the table will start the 18 special stages between Prague and Passau, as they enter into the closing stages of the title race. The field will be led by Belgians Thierry Neuville and Martijn Wydaeghe in a Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid, who currently hold a comfortable lead in the WRC class over their team-mates Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja (EST). The best-placed Toyota pairings of Sébastien Ogier / Vincent Landais (FRA) and Elvyn Evans / Scott Martin (GBR) will also be in action, as will Ford spearheads Adrien Fourmaux and Alexandre Coria (FRA). The entry lists in the WRC2 and WRC3 categories also promise to produce some exciting racing, particularly for local fans, as strong German and Czech teams will be looking to have a say in the international field. As well as reigning German rally champion Marijan Griebel (Skoda Fabia RS), Armin Kremer (Skoda Fabia RS) also starts having already been crowned FIA Masters Cup champion. Hermann Gassner jun. in a WRC3 Renault Clio Rally3 completes the trio of current and former German rally champions. Even more action comes courtesy of the drivers in the ADAC Opel e-Rally Cup, the entry list for which will be announced at a later date. Anyone wanting to take a look at the full list of competitors will find the entry list now at [centraleuropeanrally.eu](http://centraleuropeanrally.eu).

Before the world's best rally drivers arrive at the Central European Rally, they travel to the Rally Chile from 26<sup>th</sup> to September. This will determine the situation at the top of the table ahead of the showdown in the heart of Europe. Best-placed to start the CER as championship leader is Thierry Neuville (BEL), but he faces stiff opposition from two ambitious drivers within his own team, in the form of Ott Tänak and Andreas Mikkelsen. "To be honest, I can hardly wait to get back in the Hyundai i20 Rally1 Hybrid. After all, it is a while since my last WRC start in Poland," says Mikkelsen. "My asphalt rally in Croatia was even longer ago. For this reason, I will prepare for the Central European Rally by driving in Rally2 at a small rally in Italy, in order to familiarise myself with the specific conditions again."

In the race for the WRC crown, Toyota fields four Toyota GR Yaris Rally1 cars at the Central European Rally, spearheaded by Munich resident Sébastien Ogier. Looking ahead to the Central European Rally, the Frenchman says: "The start position will play a big role," as it can become increasingly difficult for subsequent cars to set top times, particularly in wet and slippery conditions. "As the rally is a little earlier this year, some nice autumnal weather would be right at the top of my wish list," says Ogier. "I like it when the conditions are the same for everyone and we all have a fair competition. It would be great for everyone if the title race were to remain close, then we could all look forward to an amazing rally."



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The best-placed Ford driver, a little distanced but by no means entirely out of the title race, is Adrien Fourmaux. “I am very much looking forward to the second staging of the Central European Rally,” says the Frenchman. “The name says it all, as you could see from the large number of spectators last year. The three-country concept offers plenty of variety – even, or especially, on the asphalt routes. Last year, I won the class in a Ford Fiesta Rally2. I am hoping I can back that up in the top category in the Ford Puma Rally1.” The second Ford Puma Rally1 Hybrid in the field will be driven by Grégoire Munster.

### Strong WRC2 field

With 17 teams, the WRC2 field is particularly exciting, especially as it also features some strong local teams. Sweden’s Oliver Solberg (Skoda) has enjoyed an impressive season so far, but will be entering uncharted waters at the CER: “The Central European Rally will be a totally new challenge for me, but that is exactly what I love about rallying. Although the last time I raced on asphalt was at the season-opener in Monte Carlo, I want to show that I can compete at the very front on all surfaces and in all conditions.” In the Citroën C3 camp, France’s Yohan Rossel could be top man. “There is no question about it: our Citroën feels right at home on asphalt – and so do I. I am hoping for nice weather, then we will hopefully have as many fans on the routes as we did last year.”

### Three German champions looking to mix it with the stars of the world championship

The opportunity to see two national champions in action in WRC2 will be particularly exciting for German fans: Armin Kremer (three-time DRM champion in 1996, 1998 and 1999, European Championship winner in 2001) lines up in the FIA Masters Cup, in which he has already wrapped up the title: “We travel to our home event with great excitement, but are also fully focussed,” says the Skoda driver from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. “Our clear goal is to continue our successful run at the Central European Rally, with our sixth victory in a row. That will be far from easy, as the selective routes are really challenging.” Marijan Griebel also starts in a WRC2 Skoda Fabia RS. He was recently crowned German rally champion for the second time in a row and now has four German titles to his name (2018, 2021, 2023 and 2024). “It is great to be able to take on the best teams in the world as reigning champions in front of our home crowd. I would like to thank our partners and sponsors, who, together with the Pole Promotion team, have made this possible. Last year, I drove the advance car and saw then how demanding the routes are. This rally not only puts the driver through his paces, but also the co-driver and the team. I can hardly wait to get started!” In the WRC3 field, Hermann Gassner jun. (2009 German rally champion) is likely to be greeted with the status of local hero. The experienced rally driver from Bad Reichenhall lines up in a Renault Clio Rally3. He is looking forward to the event: “We have pulled out all the stops to be able to start the world championship round on our doorstep. This rally is very special for us: for one thing, we are racing in WRC3 for the first time, and with a new, all-wheel drive Renault Clio Rally3. Also, our 30<sup>th</sup> world championship appearance in 17 years as a long-term Pirelli dealer will probably also be our last, as they are changing tyre partner in the top class from next season. It may sound strange, but as a Bavarian I almost like the tricky stages in the Czech Republic even more than those in my homeland and Austria. That is perhaps because, as a driver, you can make a bigger difference there.”



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