

Media Information

04.08.2025

Central European Rally welcomes rally icon Walter Röhrl

- Röhrl is part of the “Slowly Sideways” field on the support programme for the Central European Rally
- German rally legend starts in a 1975 Opel Ascona A
- Two-time world champion lines up in the original car, 50 years after his first World Championship success

Munich. A really big name returns to the world championship stage: Walter Röhrl, two-time world rally champion and a motorsport icon, will start in an automotive milestone on the support programme for the Central European Rally (16th to 19th October). At the wheel of the 1975 Opel Ascona A – the car with which he won his first World Championship rally 50 years ago – alongside the car’s owner Wolf-Dieter Ihle, Röhrl will follow the current crop of FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) cars on selected special stages as part of the “Slowly Sideways” show. Roughly 30 original cars from throughout rally history will bring world championship icons back onto the rally routes on Friday and Saturday. This is just one more highlight for fans to look forward to at the penultimate round of the FIA World Rally Championship, as well as the battle for crucial world championship points. Visitors have even longer to enjoy the spectacular scraps between the top rally drivers in the world – the action begins on Thursday with the prologue special stages in Bad Griesbach, and the teams and cars must tackle a total of 18 stages in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic before the finish on Sunday. Tickets and more information can be found at centraleuropeanrally.eu.

Röhrl and the Ascona – a historic reunion

With the appearance of Walter Röhrl, the Central European Rally welcomes undoubtedly the best-known rally driver to come from Germany. Two world titles (1980 and 1982), four victories at the Rally Monte Carlo, and an insatiable passion for driving perfection that still lives on to this day have made him a living legend of the sport. As such, fans will be delighted to see him back in action at the WRC event in October – and in the same Opel Ascona A, in which he won his first World Championship race at the Rally Acropolis in 1975, exactly 50 years ago. The original car is currently part of the collection of Wolf-Dieter Ihle, who will take his place in the co-driver seat, from where he will read the all-important pace notes to Röhrl. Although the 30 or so cars in the “Slowly Sideways” group will be appearing without any official competition or demand for top speeds, the lovingly restored racers will be keeping sporting heritage alive and giving an impression of what life was like on the world championship routes back in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Other highlights in the field include such models as a Porsche 911 SC RS from 1984 in the iconic Rothmans livery, and a Group 2 BMW 2002 from 1972, which Achim Warmbold drove at the legendary Olympia Rally.

Rally romanticism in Bad Griesbach and on the special stages

The heart of the Slowly Sideways show is Bad Griesbach thermal springs in Rottal: it is here that the vintage rally cars will erect their paddock, and where they will return between their highly-anticipated outings. On the Friday, they will be underway in the late morning and afternoon on the “Granit und Wald” and “Böhmerwald” stages. They will take to each of these stages between the two loops featuring the WRC cars – a real treat for anyone looking for a spectacular rally experience past and

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present. In the evening, the Service Park in Passau will also offer the opportunity to check out the cars up close and personal – and maybe to grab a quick selfie with Walter Röhrl.

Saturday to feature more motorsport with history in Hauzenberg and Freyung

On the Saturday, the classic cars will again help pass the time in the spectator zones on the special stages, and are set to attract more fans to Hauzenberg and Freyung. In the morning, the vintage racers will take to the new “Made in FRG” special stage, before the route takes them to Hauzenberg for the Regrouping. Here, the cars will be on display to the public, forming a perfect photo opportunity in the picturesque town centre. This is followed in the afternoon by another loop on the nearby “Granit und Wald” stage, which on this particular day is used exclusively by starters in the ADAC Opel Electric Rally Cup and the Slowly Sideways participants. In the early hours of the evening, the route heads to Passage Control in the heart of Freyung, where the historic racers will be in action immediately before the stars of the WRC and their state-of-the-art cars. This way, visitors can enjoy rallying in all its facets – from high-tech WRC racers to the sound of genuine rally legends. And the same goes in the Czech Republic on the Saturday! Here, a specially assembled field of vintage rally cars will follow the modern crop of cars onto the Kepy and Klatovy stages after the second WRC loop.

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