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17.10.2025

Ogier and Rovannerä dominate day two in three nations

- Sébastien Ogier leads the Central European Rally after the second leg
- First WRC leg to incorporate three countries – Saturday another international affair
- Visitor information, news and tickets at centraleuropeanrally.eu

Munich. A battle across three nations in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC): Day two of the Central European Rally led the teams from the pinnacle of rallying through three countries for the first time. Sébastien Ogier (Toyota) successfully defended his lead on the stages in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. The only driver capable of matching the Frenchman's pace was his team-mate Kalle Rovannerä, with the two Toyota racers often separated by mere seconds. By the evening, they had distanced third-placed Elfyn Evans by almost half a minute. That adds an extra dose of excitement to tomorrow's third leg: as well as the dramatic battle between the two leaders, the chasing pack must also go on the offensive, if they are to close the gap opened today. Those wishing to stay up to speed with the action, or looking to purchase a ticket to watch the elite of the rallying world go head to head, will find all the necessary information and the ticket shop at centraleuropeanrally.eu.

Although it looked on Friday morning as though the Hyundai drivers were going to be on the attack, Sébastien Ogier emerged at the end of the day as the clear winner. After the morning stages in Bavaria and Austria, the two loops of the Col de Jan stage in the Czech Republic, which was making its debut in the WRC, proved to be key moments: the extremely demanding and increasingly slippery stage allowed Ogier and Rovannerä to take full advantage of being first onto the route, as they were greeted by slightly better conditions than their rivals. While Ogier had his nose in front on the first run, Rovannerä just managed to outpace the Frenchman on the second loop. None of the other drivers were able to match their pace on this stage, and by the evening they had opened a virtually unassailable lead. Although third-placed Elfyn Evans did manage to set the fastest time on the final stage, he still ended the day 28.9 seconds behind second-placed Rovannerä. "That was a good day for us. We pushed all day to stay in the lead," said a satisfied Sébastien Ogier at the finish in Passau. "That worked out for us – with a very small advantage. We will try to do the same thing tomorrow. The biggest challenge today was Col de Jan – perhaps the highlight of the whole day." His closest rival Kalle Rovannerä also summed up Friday as "a good day". "It was obviously not ideal to be starting third behind Sébastien and Elfyn, but we made the best of the situation and are now in a really good position ahead of day three."

Event region in the spotlight for international rally fans

During the Central European Rally, the eyes of the motorsport public are also on the event region. That was once again the case on day two. The rally armada stopped in the Czech town of Český Krumlov at midday. The picturesque, historical town on a bend of the Vltava river provided a spectacular backdrop for the Regrouping. Australian Taylor Gill, who came into the rally as the leader in the Junior WRC, perfectly summed up how many of the rally drivers and visitors were feeling: "It is really cool to drive here and discover these old towns, which you would not usually get to see. Here I am in this town,



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which, as an Australian, I have never actually heard of before. Then you get here and it is really, really cool, with a great atmosphere and great people.” The afternoon programme featured the granite town of Hauzenberg in the Lower Bavarian region of the rally: the rally party in Hauzenberg included many activities for fans, the highlight of which was the interview zone for the WRC field in the centre of the town.

WRC visits Freyung for the first time on Saturday, before heading to the Czech Republic

Fans can again look forward to a packed programme with many highlights on Saturday. From a sporting perspective, the Central European Rally is shifting up a gear: while Friday’s second leg included 99 kilometres of special stage, day three of the rally features just short of 104 kilometres against the clock. It all kicks off in the morning (08:15) with the brand-new “Made in FRG” stage near Röhrnbach. The focus then shifts to the district town of Freyung in the afternoon, when there will be a passage control with the rally cars in the town centre – this is part of the big rally party on the town square, which starts at 15:00. The second run of “Made in FRG” then follows at 18:25. There will also be plenty of awesome rally entertainment between the two loops, courtesy of the historic “Slowly Sideways” cars and the starters in the ADAC Opel Electric Rally Cup. The rally also returns to the Czech Republic – with a feast of action: the crews must tackle the Keply (10:35 and 14:05) and Klatovy (11:35 and 15:05) special stages twice. The Czech town of Klatovy will once again be a fan hotspot in the third year of the CER, as it plays host to the Regrouping – complete with technical zone – on Saturday afternoon (from 12:15). It goes without saying that there will be plenty of entertainment, autograph sessions and information on the big screen. And the entertainment continues at the end of the rally day: the return of the cars to the Service Park in Passau in the evening will be accompanied by a programme of interviews, entertainment and live music. Admission to the Dreiländerhalle and Service Park is free. Tickets for the thrilling live action on the special stages are available from the online ticket shop at centraleuropeanrally.eu.

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