

Media Information



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Rovanperä takes the lead at the Central European Rally

- **Bad day for Sébastien Ogier: First he loses the lead, then he crashes out**
- **Following Sébastien Ogier's crash, Kalle Rovanperä wins the leg in commanding fashion**
- **Be there to witness the grand finale: Tickets available at centraleuropeanrally.eu**

Munich. The longest leg of the Central European Rally treated fans and drivers in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) to real excitement and spectacular scenes – not to mention genuine motorsport drama. Having started the day as the leader, Sébastien Ogier (Toyota) spun off the road and out of contention after hitting a tree on the demanding second stage of the day in Keply, Czech Republic. That made life relatively easy for fellow Toyota racer Kalle Rovanperä, who had already cancelled out Ogier's slender advantage and taken the lead on the opening stage of the day. The Finn held a comfortable lead for the remaining stages and went into the overnight break as the rally leader, ahead of Ott Tänak (Hyundai i20 N Rally1). Ogier will have the opportunity to limit the amount of damage done on Sunday, as valuable bonus points are up for grabs in both the separate "Super Sunday" classification and on the Wolf Power Stage. As such, there is still sure to be plenty of excitement on the final 78 kilometres against the clock. Anyone wanting to get their hands on a ticket for what promises to be a furious finale can do so in the online ticket shop at centraleuropeanrally.eu.

One man's joy is another man's sorrow: for Kalle Rovanperä, the retirement of his team-mate meant he was able to complete Saturday's leg without any pressure. "That was a good day," said the Finn after the final stage of the day, SS14. "The afternoon felt a little more difficult for us, but the conditions were good." With one eye on the valuable bonus points on offer on the final day, he added: "Tomorrow is the day that counts. I think it will be a tight battle." Rovanperä had been embroiled in an exciting scrap with Ogier since Thursday, with both drivers pushing each other to be at their very best. Rovanperä set the top time on six of the ten stages completed before Ogier's retirement, while Ogier was fastest on two occasions. With the Frenchman out of the picture, Takamoto Katsuta (Toyota, two stage wins), Ott Tänak and Thierry Neuville (both Hyundai) set the fastest times on Saturday's remaining special stages. However, they were unable to make sufficient inroads into Rovanperä's lead to put him under any pressure.

After misfortune on 2024, Ogier suffers another DNF this year

The Central European Rally is still not a happy hunting ground for world championship leader Ogier. Last year, the Frenchman crashed out on the penultimate stage on the Sunday whilst battling with Ott Tänak for the win. This time, the same fate struck on Saturday's second stage: Ogier came off the road at full speed, hit a tree and then spun back across the road minus a wheel. "We had a puncture on the front left," explained the eight-time world champion, who describes the rally region in Bavaria as his adopted home. "At the same time, a sensor stopped working, which meant we were not aware of the issue with the tyre. The car just didn't want to turn, there was nothing we could do." Unlike last year, he can at least limit the damage somewhat, as he can rejoin the rally on Sunday – provided the car can be repaired by then.



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A “Super Sunday” when it comes to the fan programme too!

The closing Sunday promises to produce many more exciting moments, as the day’s top performances are rewarded with bonus points as the “Super Sunday” (5/4/3/2/1 points). Four special stages with a total of 77.78 kilometres against the clock face the competitors on the final day of the competition, as the focus shifts to the rally region in Germany and Austria. The two loops of the cross-border “Beyond Borders” stage (08:25 and 10:05) both take the drivers from Lower Bavaria into the Austrian region of Mühlviertel. The “Mühlthal” stage (10:05 and 13:15) is located entirely in Austria. At 26.5 kilometres, it is not only the longest special stage of the whole event, but the second loop is also classed as the “Wolf Power Stage”, meaning extra points are up for grabs in the same format as the “Super Sunday” classification. The action remains exciting right down to the finish – and the event will also attract fans with an entertaining programme revolving featuring the Power Stage and the presentation ceremony. Not only are there multiple attractive spectator zones at the finish in Peilstein, offering spectacular views of the action, but the Flower Ceremony for the overall winners will also take place here immediately after the finish. The Dreiländerhalle will then host the grand presentation ceremony from 16:30. As on all days of the event, admission is free, giving every visitor the opportunity to be there live when the overall and class winners receive their hard-earned trophies.

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