

# Media Information



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## Kalle Rovanperä wins the Central European Rally

- **Elfyn Evans takes the overall lead in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)**
- **100,000 visitors celebrate a festival of rallying in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic**
- **Toyota secures the WRC Manufacturer title at the tri-nation event**
- **Drivers from the rally region claim good results at the world championship rally**

Munich. Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN / FIN, Toyota GR Yaris Rally1) won the Central European Rally. 100,000 spectators flocked to round twelve of this year's World Rally Championship to see the 25-year-old double world champion and his co-driver take victory ahead of the fellow Toyota pairing of Elfyn Evans (GBR) and Scott Martin (GBR), and Ott Tänak (EST) and Martin Järveoja (EST) in a Hyundai i20 N Rally1. Evans now leads the Drivers' Championship (247 points), followed by Rovanperä and Sébastien Ogier, who are tied on 234 points. Ogier and his co-driver Vincent Landais crashed out on Saturday, but were able to perform a degree of damage limitation on the final leg. Rejoining the race on Sunday, the Frenchman won the daily classification and picked up the maximum five "Super Sunday" bonus points. He also scored a further five points for setting the fastest time on the Wolf Power Stage. The top performance of the Toyota teams allowed the Japanese brand to wrap up the Manufacturer World Championship with two rallies still to come. All the news, reports and photo galleries from the weekend are available at [centraleuropeanrally.eu](http://centraleuropeanrally.eu).

The key moment of the rally proved to be the retirement of Sébastien Ogier on Saturday morning. Instead of challenging for overall victory, the Frenchman could do no more than limit the amount of damage done, rejoining the rally in pursuit of bonus points on Sunday. Rovanperä, who up until that point had been embroiled in a captivating battle for the lead, found himself out in front on his own. From that point on, all he had to do was manage the lead he had already opened up over the rest of the WRC1 field. "It was great to be back on asphalt. That was a good weekend for us. Seb and I were superfast until his crash. A big thank you goes to everyone in the workshop and here at the rally: we are clearly the best team." He promises to make it a dramatic climax to the World Championship: "I am hungry and will do everything in my power to win the title race."

Fellow Toyota driver Elfyn Evans drove a strategically clever rally, picking up valuable points for second place and bagging a further eight points for Super Sunday and the Power Stage. Hyundai spearhead Ott Tänak also scored well in third place (plus one point in the Super Sunday classification), but failed to make any significant progress in the title race. With two World Championship rallies remaining, he trails championship leader Evans by 50 points in fourth place, and faces an uphill battle to challenge for the title. Fellow Hyundai racer Thierry Neuville was also unable to challenge for victory at the Central European Rally. The reigning world champion crashed out on the bridge across the border between Germany and Austria on the morning's "Beyond Borders" stage. The battle for the World Championship title in the WRC1 class once again gains pace after the Central European Rally, with the stage set for a thrilling three-way battle fight between Toyota drivers Evans, Ogier and Rovanperä.



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## Spotlight on local favourites

Oliver Solberg (Toyota) was the dominant force in the Rally2 class. The WRC2 champion elect from Sweden won the rally in commanding fashion, ahead of two drivers from the event region. As Solberg was making a non-competitive start, victory in WRC2 went to the Czech pairing of Jan Černý and Ondřej Krajča in a Skoda Fabia RS, followed by their compatriots Filip Mareš and Radovan Bucha (Toyota GR Yaris). Philip Geipel and co-driver Jennifer Lerch were also competing well in their Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, but crashed out on SS 17. In the Junior WRC, Australians Taylor Gill and Daniel Brkic benefitted from the retirement of Ali Türkkan and Oytun Albayrak (both TUR), who had led for much of the rally: the two Aussies went on to win the class, in which the competitors all line up in the Ford Fiesta Rally3. The Central European Rally is of special significance to Claire Schönborn. It was here last year that the 26-year-old German came through a demanding nomination procedure to claim her place as official driver for the WRC Young Drivers Team. Her first season in the Junior World Rally Championship ended with fifth place in her class at the CER. Schönborn ended the rally in 17<sup>th</sup> place, making her the best-placed German. "It was an emotional rollercoaster," she said, summing up her season. "There was one very, very good result, but also the last place when we rolled the car – so a real mixed bag. I am very grateful for this opportunity, which I am definitely not taking for granted. I have learned a lot on gravel, snow and ice, all of which was new to me."

## Central European Rally bids farewell to the WRC

"We have once again been able to present the three host countries of Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic as fantastic motorsport nations this year," said Dr. Gerd Ennser, Sport President of ADAC e.V. "The extremely positive feedback from the rally scene, and from visitors from all over Europe, shows us that we were able to send a signal for cooperation and international friendship with this concept." After three successful rallies, the organisers of the first tri-nation event in the history of the WRC have not applied to stage a round of the World Rally Championship next year. As a result, this year's rally marks the end of the pan-European event, although it is already certain that high-class international rallying will return to the region in the future. After all, the rally regions also benefit from the event, as Ennser is keen to stress: "Academic studies have shown that the Central European Rally has had a significant economic impact for the event region, for example in the form of overnight stays and tax revenues. Furthermore, we have showcased the best of our common homeland through this event." The rally centre in the three-river city of Passau, Regrouping in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Český Krumlov on the Friday, the Flower Ceremony for the overall winners in the Austrian town of Peilstein, and many other regional highlights have shown the beauty of this unique European cultural landscape. "I am sure the wonderful images from this remarkable region are something that will not be forgotten quickly," says Ennser.

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