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Clerk of the Course, Andreas Dinzinger: Everything ready for the WRC

- Preparations for the Central European Rally, 26th to 29th October, going according to plan
- Rally combines the best stages from the three regions hosting the event
- World rally champion could be crowned in Passau

When the World Rally Championship comes to Bavaria, Austria and the Czech Republic from 26th to 29th October, Clerk of the Course Andreas Dinzinger (44) will be pulling all the strings. The man from Waidhofen is the head of an international team of experienced rally organisers, who have put together some of the most beautiful routes from each hosting region to create a fantastic festival of motorsport. The drivers of the mesmerizing WRC cars will be up against the clock for over 300 kilometres, and may even crown their world champion come the finish in Passau. For those organising the penultimate round of the 2023 World Rally Championship, this would be the icing on the cake after an intense planning and organisational marathon. In an interview, the Clerk of the Course gives an overview of how plans are progressing and looks ahead to the event.

After lengthy preparations, we are gradually coming to the critical phase for the Central European Rally. As Clerk of the Course, what are you occupied with at the moment?

Andreas Dinzinger: “The organisational framework has been in place for a long time, and we are now working on implementing the plans. At the moment, the final marshals are being assigned to their positions out on the route, receiving more training and being prepared for the peculiarities of a WRC rally. We are also setting to work distributing material. In the end, a good 1,700 marshals will be deployed across the 18 special stages. They must obviously have many things ready to hand – from barrier tape to whistle and broom – whenever they need them. If you consider that, including helpers in the surrounding area, roughly 2,400 people will be working on the special stages, it is easy to imagine that we are faced with a pretty big challenge when it comes to the logistics alone.”

Are the preparations on schedule, or have there been changes to the original ideas?

Andreas Dinzinger: “It goes without saying that we tried to work through the really important points as early as possible. They include, for example, the necessary approval procedures, which have all been sorted or are in the final phase. We are also totally on schedule when it comes to the routes, material planning and everything you need to run a rally at world championship level. Planning how to deploy the marshals is a mammoth task, which we will perform as well as possible. However, we have already identified room for improvement for the coming years in this regard. Apart from that, there are obviously always little things that need to be adapted – for example, because scheduled volunteers have to drop out at the last minute, or local conditions change: we are, after all, racing through an agricultural region, in which a new pile of logs could “pop up” overnight next to a special stage. Extra effort must be made to ensure that these potentially hazardous areas are secured – but we are obviously ready for that kind of thing.”



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The route through three European countries plays a major role in the concept of the Central European Rally. You obviously need to work together as an international team. How is that playing out?

Andreas Dinzinger: “The idea of an international rally was at the heart of our concept from the outset, and was immediately greeted with great enthusiasm. In practice, this concept comes with some peculiarities. On the one hand, it obviously demands extra effort: for example, we have to consider different approval procedures in three European countries. However, we are obviously also bundling the strengths of experienced rally organisers and the best rally routes from the three regions. Furthermore, we are acknowledging the idea of international cooperation through this special form of organisation. In this day and age, we want to send a signal that friendship and cooperation are enriching across borders.”

In order to make the many different special stages work, you must need to cooperate with many decision-makers?

Andreas Dinzinger: “Yes! And we are delighted that we have been met with open arms and open ears almost everywhere. However, it was obviously a long and very complex process before we had come to an understanding with really all the powers that be in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. From village mayor and local council to districts and counties, right up to state level, we have had a lot of discussions and gone through many approval procedures. On top of that, you obviously also have the cooperation with regulatory authorities, police, fire departments, and aid and rescue services: we have experienced great cooperation across the board.”

What can visitors to the Central European Rally particularly look forward to? Are their peculiarities that guests should know about?

Andreas Dinzinger: “Firstly, they can look forward to really demanding special stages, on which we have set up the best locations for spectators to give them an enjoyable rally experience – from the journey and parking to spectacular views of the action. It will be a big challenge for the teams and drivers, because pretty much none of the drivers have driven the routes before, and there are different characteristics on the stages in each of the three countries. The weather may also present its own unique challenge: in late October, it can obviously be wet and the foliage can make it slippery, which makes the routes even more selective. I am looking forward to seeing the best rally drivers in the world go head to head.”

And, as the Clerk of the Course, what are you looking forward to?

Andreas Dinzinger: “For the organisers, the Central European Rally means the World Rally Championship is racing on our doorstep. We are proud to show our beautiful scenery all over the world, and have the start in the world-famous city of Prague and the Service Park in picturesque Passau. It is no coincidence that are a popular holiday region, which is superbly set up for tourists! Furthermore, we are the penultimate round of this season’s WRC, and the world rally champion could even be crowned at our rally. That would be the best thing for me, personally.”



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