

# Media Information



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## Kalle Rovanperä wins the world championship on the demanding routes of the Central European Rally

- **Toyota driver Rovanperä claims the world championship title – Thierry Neuville wins the rally**
- **125,000 spectators flock to the inaugural Central European Rally**
- **Satisfied organisers look forward to the second staging, from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024**
- **Available now, for three days only: early bird ticket for € 69**

That was a brilliant premiere for the Central European Rally: the new round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), which was held for the first time this year, produced an impressive spectacle across its 18 demanding asphalt stages, and proved to be a worthy event for the crowning of the new world rally champion: second place behind rally winner Thierry Neuville (Belgium, Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid) was enough for Finland's Kalle Rovanperä (Toyota GR Yaris Rally1 Hybrid) to pick up the points needed to wrap up the title with one rally remaining. Ott Tänak (Estonia, Ford Puma Rally1 Hybrid) finished third to join them on the podium in the German city of Passau, which has housed the Service Park and been the centre of the rally world for the past four days. Following the glamorous start in Prague's iconic Hradčany Square, the teams delivered a captivating battle over the 310 kilometres at full throttle, thrilling the 125,000 spectators who had flocked to the routes all weekend. The Central European Rally will again feature on the WRC calendar next year: the rally will be staged for the second time from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024, and those who act quickly can already purchase tickets at a special rate. The four-day ticket goes on sale today for three days and is available for € 69. The ticket shop and lots of news and images from the rally weekend can be found at [centraleuropeanrally.eu](http://centraleuropeanrally.eu).

The pivotal moment at this year's Central European Rally happened on Saturday morning, when Toyota driver Elfyn Evans skidded off the road and toppled out of contention. The Welshman was able to rejoin the rally on the final day, and picked up five valuable bonus points for the fastest time on the final Power Stage. However, that was not enough to catch his team-mate Kalle Rovanperä, who ended the rally in second place. As such, the Finn was able to celebrate winning the world championship with one rally still to come: "I feel really good! For me personally, this year was even more important than last year. The competition was tougher and we did a really good job in the cockpit. The biggest thanks obviously go to Jonne Halttunen. He is the best co-driver in the world. I will enjoy this title even more than my first." With the weather unsettled at first, the rally cars left plenty of mud on the route, which resulted in a perilously slippery surface. "They were the most demanding asphalt stages I have experienced in my career so far," said world champion Rovanperä. Winning the rally was also hugely important for Thierry Neuville: thanks to his haul of points, he has climbed to within just seven points of second-placed Evans in the WRC table, setting up a thrilling battle with the Welshman for the runner-up spot in the world championship at the season finale in Japan. "I am really pleased to have



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reached the finish,” said the Belgium with a sigh of relief at the presentation ceremony in Passau. “it has been an incredibly tiring and challenging weekend. We did a good job and performed consistently. That paid off in the end. It was a success for the whole team this weekend, and one we can be really proud of.” Estonian Ott Tänak in a Ford was unable to put the two front-runners under any real pressure on the asphalt stages in the tri-border region. He leaves Passau in fourth place in the world championship, well behind third-placed Neuville.

### Organisers more than happy with huge crowds

The first sign that the Central European Rally would be a real crowd-puller came at the start, which took place in front of the presidential palace in Prague’s legendary Hradčany Square. The organisers counted a total of 125,000 spectators lining the stages in the Czech Republic (Thursday / Friday), Germany and Austria (Saturday / Sunday). “The fans helped us make a thrilling sporting occasion into an unforgettable event,” said a delighted Prof. Dr. Harald Hertz, President of the AMF. “That was a great festival of rallying! However, I would also like to thank the many residents and local supporters, who welcomed rally fans from all over the world with open arms.” Even before the inaugural rally had been completed, the International Motorsport Federation FIA had already confirmed that the new WRC rally would also form part of next year’s calendar. “We have experienced rallying of the very highest standard this week,” said ADAC Sport President Dr. Gerd Ennser, who can now turn his attention to the second staging, from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024. “The routes we selected have thrilled fans and drivers alike. We could not have repaid the faith put in us by the FIA and the WRC promoter any better at our inaugural event.” The Central European Rally marked the first time that a round of the WRC had been held across the borders of three European countries. ACCR President JUDr. Jan Šťovíček, Ph.D.: “A whole year of preparation has paid dividends. The international team from three friendly countries has worked superbly together, regardless of language barriers and cultural differences, and has delivered a top-class WRC Rally. We are grateful to all the marshals and other volunteers for making this possible.”

### Super offer: four-day tickets for 2024 available for a few days at a special rate

As soon as the presentation ceremony was over, the official homepage of the Central European Rally immediately launched the advance sale of tickets for next year: to celebrate the success of the inaugural rally, fans can enjoy an early bird offer, available for three days, on tickets for 2024. The four-day ticket from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024 costs just € 69 (rather than € 99, as it was this year). A perfect opportunity to enjoy the pinnacle of rallying in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic again next year.

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