

PRESS RELEASE 5

59th Rallye International du Valais A head-to-head battle

After an intense fight, the 59th edition of the Rallye International du Valais delivered its verdict. The Škoda Fabia R5 of the crew composed of Giandomenico Basso and Lorenzo Granai climbed on the final rostrum at the Casernes in Sion. The Italian driver wins in Valais for the second time in a row. Constantly driving flat out, he managed to pip the Swiss duo of Olivier Burri / Jean-Jacques Ferrero (also with a Škoda Fabia R5) at the post. The 8-time winner of the Rallye International du Valais kept his rival at bay until SS 11 (Chamoson - Ovronnaz), after which he was leading by only 3s. Basso then built an insuperable gap to win the rally and the Tour European Rally title.

Olivier Burri's son, Michael, complete the podium by climbing on the third step. With Andersson Levratti in the right seat of their Škoda Fabia R5, he was the author of a regular race. The retirements of Kevin Abbring / Pieter Tsjoen (Ford Fiesta R5, off road in SS 13) and Jérémie Toedtli / Alexandre Chioso (Škoda Fabia R5, mechanical issue after SS 14) have released Michael Burri from any pressure. He finished with a 52s lead on the Škoda R5 of Mike Coppens / Renaud Jamoul.



The Swiss Rally Championship has also been played at the Rallye International du Valais. The national title went to a driver from Ticino for the first time ever. Fifth at the finish in Sion, the crew of Ivan Ballinari / Paolo Pianca (Škoda Fabia R5) took the crown, while Cédric Althaus / Jessica Bayard (Ford Fiesta R5) ranked seventh overall and second in the Championship.

A sixth Fabia completes the Czech brand's absolute supremacy, that of Federico Della Casa / Domenico Pozzi. Eighth overall with their Peugeot 208 T16 R5, Joachim Wagemans / François Geerland win the TER 2WD Cup. They finish ahead of the Abarth Spider Rallye of Frenchmen Raphaël Astier / Frédéric Vauclare, 9th overall, winner of the RGT class and FIA RGT Cup champions.

Ishmael Vustiner / Florine Kummer dominated the Clio R3T Alps Trophy. By finishing 10th, they outclassed Nicolas Lathion / Yannick Schriber and Olivier Courtois / Hubert Risser, 16th and 18th respectively. Courtois won the title, which earns him to participate in the 2019 Monte Carlo Rally at the wheel of Renault Switzerland's official Clio R3T.

In the Swiss Junior Rally Championship, the crew of Thomas Schmid / Quentin Marchand (Peugeot 208 R2) clinched both the victory (17th overall) and the title. After the retirement of Jonathan Michellod / Stéphane Fellay (off road), Sacha Althaus / Lisiane Zbinden, take the runner-up position in the classification of the rally (23rd overall) and in the Championship.

Six cars overcame the many pitfalls of the course in the Rallye Historique du Valais. For only 6 "9, the Renault 5 Turbo of Gratien Lovey / Kathy Lattion takes the victory, ahead of the BMW M3 of Eddy Bérard / Frédéric Rausis and Julien Camadona / Maxime d'Ignoti.

DRIVERS QUOTES

Giandomenico BASSO

We had a perfect race and have been very fast. We did not come to win this rally, but our appetite grew, and to beat Olivier (Burri) and Abbring, we had to go faster and faster. We mainly made the difference in the long 22km special stage. My co-driver told me that I seemed to be bewitched! Thank you for the excellent organization of this event, which I really like and I hope to come back soon.

Olivier BURRI

It was two intense days battling with Basso and Abbring, then Kevin [Abbring] went off the road and had to be evacuated by helicopter. At the moment my thoughts are with the driver and co-driver's families. The fight was amazing, crazily intense, I had to roll up my sleeves and try my best to stay at the top. Today it was very tiring physically and mentally. I thank my family for their support and I also thank my team Roger Tuning. I absolutely wanted to win a ninth victory...



Michael BURRI

It's a wonderful rally! This is my fourth podium in a row! The three drivers in front of me were going too fast and especially my dad... Then after Jérémie Toedtli's retirement, we had to keep our third place. A father and son podium it's beautiful... Just behind dad... I hope that next year, I'll beat him!

Ivan BALLINARI

It's done! We are very pleased with what we did. This is the first time that the Swiss champion title goes to a driver from Ticino. And now, we are ready for the third leg: partying!

Cédric ALTHAUS

When I was a little boy, I saw the best Swiss rally drivers with the Balbosca team. I was dreaming... To tackle a whole season with Balbosca, it is a dream came true.

Raphaël ASTIER

I enjoyed this Rallye du Valais all the way. Everything worked well, with a good day yesterday and the same thing today when we had a lot of fun at the wheel of the Abarth, without making mistakes, cautious but with a good pace anyway. The special stages are great with a lot of changes in rhythm and grip. I also enjoyed the gravel part where we didn't take any risks as we were leading comfortably in the lead. Finishing 2nd or 3rd did not change anything on the title point of view. However it's great to win: four races, four victories and a nice ninth place overall, I'm happy.

Steeves SCHNEEBERGER

I am pleased to be here tonight. I congratulate Ivan [Ballinari] for his well-deserved title. The beginning of the rally was catastrophic for us and what we endured yesterday is difficult to live, but we had to finish with a good thing. Honestly I'm glad to be here!

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