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SUBARU AND BRANDON SEMENUK WIN NEW ENGLAND FOREST RALLY WITH THRILLING LAST-STAGE FINISH

Newry, ME, Jul 18, 2022 - Subaru Motorsports USA driver Brandon Semenuk and co-driver Keaton Williams won a stunning victory at New England Forest Rally over rival Ken Block thanks to a remarkable win on the rally's final stage. The crew of the #180 Subaru WRX STI rally car captured the win by just 0.9 seconds after two days and more than 110 miles of flat-out rallying—the closest finish to a U.S. rally event in recent memory. Teammates Travis Pastrana and Rhianon Gelsomino in the #1 WRX STI also finished on the podium in third place overall.

“What an incredible weekend!” said Semenuk after his victory. “We were flat out for the whole rally against Ken and to come away with such a close win is just amazing. Keaton and I had a great feeling in the car all weekend after some changes to our setup and felt like we really needed this to take the championship lead into the last three rounds of the year.”

New England Forest Rally is one of the oldest and most popular events on the American Rally Association (ARA) calendar. From the outset, the 2022 event was a head-to-head fight between Semenuk and Block. Semenuk won three of the five stages on the rally's opening day, taking a 21-second lead into Saturday's ten remaining stages. With the starting order reshuffled for the second day, Semenuk went out first, scrubbing the loose top layer from the road and giving Block the chance to chase from second in his Hyundai i20 WRC. Block and co-driver Alex Gelsomino began to take time back, winning all five stages in the first loop of the day and narrowing Semenuk's lead to just 3.3 seconds with five stages left to run. Meanwhile, Pastrana dropped back due to a blown turbo and elected to ease the pace to preserve his car and defend third position.

Semenuk fought back in the afternoon with a 9-second win on SS11, but Block continued to steadily gain, eventually taking the lead after SS13 and extending his margin to 2.9 seconds going into the 3.9-mile final test on SS15, also designated as the Power Stage and worth up to five bonus championship points. With the sun low in the sky and no wind, Block experienced thick dust and reduced visibility behind Semenuk's all-out push from first on the road, limiting his pace. Semenuk would ultimately win the Power Stage by 3.8 seconds ahead of Block, enough for an incredibly narrow 0.9-second victory.

With his second perfect 27-point weekend and third overall victory of 2022, Semenuk now leads the championship with 99 points. Pastrana's third-place finish dropped him to second in the title race with 95, while Block sits third with 90 points and three rounds remaining on the calendar.

Subaru Motorsports USA will be back on the stages August 19-20 at Ojibwe Forests Rally in Minnesota.

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