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SUBARU AND BRANDON SEMENUK WIN 2022 AMERICAN RALLY ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP

- Canadian rally star and mountain bike legend wins first U.S. title over Ken Block
- Teammate Travis Pastrana finishes third overall in 2021 championship defense
- Sixteenth overall driver's championship for Subaru Motorsports USA

Marquette, MI, Oct 17, 2022 - Subaru Motorsports USA driver Brandon Semenuk and co-driver Keaton Williams clinched their first-ever American Rally Association (ARA) driver's and co-driver's championships ahead of Hoonigan Racing Division rivals Ken Block and Alex Gelsomino with a victory at Lake Superior Performance Rally (LSPR), the final round of the 2022 ARA National Championship calendar. Subaru teammates and 2021 champions Travis Pastrana and Rhianon Gelsomino finished second on the rally and third overall in the title race.

"I'm just speechless right now, can't believe we got the championship!" said Semenuk after the final stage. "Our goal was to keep pace with Ken and keep the pressure on since we felt like we had an advantage in the conditions this weekend, and knew we needed the rally win to take home the title. It's an incredible feeling and the team has done such a great job to develop the car and keep us in the fight this year so we could have the opportunity to get this done."

The 2022 ARA Overall championship was one of the most thrilling in U.S. rally history, with a season-long fight between Semenuk and Block coming down to a winner-take-all final event. Block entered the championship with a new Hyundai i20 WRC—a modified World Rally Car given a waiver to compete in the U.S. championship—that was expected to be the fastest car ever to run on the U.S. stages, while Semenuk looked to move out of the shadow of six-time champion Travis Pastrana in his second full season with Subaru. After the Canadian rising star took early wins at 100 Acre Wood and Olympus while Pastrana worked his way back from a pelvic fracture, Block began a run of four out of five rally wins only broken by Semenuk's last-stage victory at New England Forest Rally in July.

Subaru and Vermont SportsCar responded to the challenge with a series of midseason aero and setup changes to the WRX STI rally cars that narrowed the performance gap, but a Semenuk crash at September's Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally allowed Block to take a slim championship lead and set up a showdown at the final rally of the year.

Lake Superior, based in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and one of the most historic rounds on the U.S. rally calendar, is known for cool weather, stunning fall foliage and roads that turn slick when the weather is wet. Despite Block's obvious pace, Friday's snow flurries and temperatures hovering around the freezing mark seemed to favor the challenger from Canada thanks to extensive experience in his home championship's notoriously tricky spring and fall rallies.

Block struck first on Friday, winning three stages on the opening loop and building a ten-second lead over Semenuk, but the road surfaces were becoming muddier and more dangerous as the afternoon wore on. After light pods were fitted to the cars at the afternoon service, darkness and more snow descended as the drivers set out to conclude the day with a repeat of the same four-stage loop. On Stage 7 the championship picture shifted dramatically as a slippery right-hand corner caught out the Hoonigan crew, who went straight off the road and into the trees. Semenuk inherited the lead, with the second WRX STI of Pastrana moving into second; damage to the Hyundai WRC car would prove too extensive to allow Block to continue.

With the event lead in hand, Semenuk and Williams adopted a quick but cautious pace on Saturday aimed at bringing the car home safely. Pastrana and Gelsomino, already mathematically eliminated from the title picture but always competitive on pace, traded stage wins with their teammates and ultimately brought home a Subaru 1-2 event finish.

The first-ever national driver's title for Brandon Semenuk in just his second full season competing in the U.S. championship represents a remarkable sixteenth overall U.S. rally driver's crown for Subaru Motorsports USA, and places Semenuk's name alongside Mark Lovell, David Higgins and Pastrana as American rally champions in the blue and gold WRX STI rally cars.

About Subaru Motorsports USA

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