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SUBARU AND BRANDON SEMENUK REPEAT WIN AT 100 ACRE WOOD RALLY

Salem, MO, Mar 21, 2023 - Defending series overall champion Brandon Semenuk and co-driver Keaton Williams took the win at this weekend's Rally in the 100 Acre Wood after a suspenseful battle that persisted over two days. The Subaru Motorsports USA team traded stage wins atop the leaderboard with the #97 WRC-derived Ford Fiesta of driver Barry McKenna throughout the weekend, ultimately finding a 6.8-second overall advantage in the final stages. Locking in a victory in the second round of the 2023 American Rally Association (ARA) Championship, the Semenuk/Williams duo shows strong title defense early in the season.

The win mirrors Semenuk and Williams' effort from 2022, when they also won through the fast and rough southern Missouri stages. "We're really glad to have won for a second year in a row at the Wood," said Semenuk. "Tire choice was critical to put us in a position to fight for every second, and thankfully things broke our way."

Tire selection came into play immediately on Friday, with the forest roads drying out after heavy rains the day before. Semenuk and McKenna swapped victories over the first four stages, and after 56 miles run the Subaru held a slim 5.3-second lead. The sun stayed out on Saturday, but with high winds and temperatures in the 20s, course conditions weren't as predictable as they seemed from the surface. Pushing for every fraction of a second saw Semenuk tap a tree and lose his rear bumper on stage 9, but still prevail by 2.7 seconds. McKenna found his groove on stages 10-14 and was up 6.9 seconds overall going into the second service.

Stage 15 is where the race turned in earnest in favor of Semenuk; spectators reported McKenna stalling and then having difficulty getting the Fiesta running again. Subaru took the stage with a lead of 17.6 seconds but it was clear McKenna was pushing. Coming into the third service, Semenuk's lead had been cut to 7.3-seconds ahead of the power stage. The team had a short 15 minute window to change tires, fit lights, and check the car over before the crucial power stage decided the overall victor. McKenna came out ahead in the power stage, but only by .4 seconds; Semenuk and the Subaru Motorsports USA team held on for the rally win.

Next for the Subaru Motorsports USA team is the DirtFish Olympus Rally, to be held April 22-23.

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