

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT NEWSLETTER

› February 1/2020



ŠKODA
SIMPLY CLEVER

Oliver Solberg/Aaron Johnston,
ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo



WELCOME TO THE NEW SEASON!

New season – new challenges! In 2020, ŠKODA Motorsport will focus even more on customer teams and the development of young and promising drivers. A cooperation with the 18 years old Oliver Solberg and his team, concerning selected rounds of the WRC3 category of the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship, has just started at Rally Sweden. We spoke with Michal Hrabánek, Director of ŠKODA Motorsport, about this exciting project.

Mr. Hrabánek, for the 2020 season the focus of ŠKODA Motorsport has evolved compared to recent years. Can you tell us something about the new strategy?

Michal Hrabánek: During the last five years, we won five team championships and consequently four drivers' championships in the WRC2 and WRC2 Pro categories of the FIA World Rally Championship. In 2020, our focus is not on collecting more titles, however. Our main target is to further strengthen the co-operation with our customers. And we want to

develop young and talented drivers like we successfully did already in the past.

What will be the program of ŠKODA Motorsport during the 2020 season?

Michal Hrabánek: At the recent Rally Sweden, we started a cooperation with Oliver Solberg and his team, which covers selected European rounds of the WRC3 championship.

What do you expect from Oliver?

Michal Hrabánek: He is just 18 years

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old, but already proved his talent, for example by becoming the youngest driver ever to win a European Championship event at Rally Liepāja in 2019. To Oliver, each World Championship rally is totally new. For him it's all about getting as much experience as possible. By providing him with our ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo (formerly called R5 evo before the motorsport association FIA changed the category name), our target is to give him a fast and reliable car in order to help him to establish himself among the frontrunners of the WRC3 category. Already during his ŠKODA debut at Rally Sweden, Oliver's performance was quite promising. He had a WRC3 podium position in sight, before a puncture in the very last stage relegated him from third to fifth position. Nonetheless, any expectation of him possible fighting for the WRC3 title would be premature in 2020, it's primarily about to gain as much experience as possible in 2020.

What about the development of the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo?

Michal Hrabánek: At Rally Sweden, 17 competitors were at the start line



ŠKODA customer racing (from left):
Team Manager Pavel Hortek,
Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek,
David Jareš (responsible for customer program)

with Rally2 cars. Nine of them trusted a ŠKODA FABIA, which made ŠKODA the most popular brand by far. Until today, ŠKODA Motorsport sold 336 rally FABIA cars to customers worldwide. This success also means a great responsibility to us. By the way, our customers not only really appreciate that our FABIA Rally2 evo is fast. We could also improve the life time of the main components, which helps to reduce the running costs throughout the season significantly. We are continuously developing the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to improve it and to keep it competitive. A key role plays Jan Kopecký who has been developing the FABIA as a driver from

the beginning. He will continue to help us not only by testing the car, but also compete in the Czech Rally Championship as well.

Will ŠKODA continue to be present in rallying?

Michal Hrabánek: This year ŠKODA AUTO is celebrating its 125. birthday. The company was founded in 1895, during the pioneering era of the automobile, making ŠKODA AUTO one of the longest-established car manufacturers in the world. And since 1901, for 119 years, we are involved in motorsports, which became a part of our DNA. Therefore, we will continue this long-term tradition.



Oliver Solberg/Aaron Johnston,
ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

MEN TO WATCH – THREE ŠKODA CUSTOMER TEAMS AT A GLANCE

At the recent WRC round Rally Sweden, nine ŠKODA crews took the challenge of one of the most difficult winter rallies since years. All of them made it to the finish. These are three of them:

Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

The Finnish crew lead the WRC3 category for most of Rally Sweden. In the end they finished second, only five seconds adrift of victory. Before, their season had already started successfully. They won SM Vaakuna Rally, Mikkeli (second round of the Finnish Rally Championship), with a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo operated by Team TGS World Wide. Currently Lindholm/Korhonen hold second overall in the Finnish Rally Championship.



Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen,
ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

Eerik Pietarinen/Miikka Anttila ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

At the challenging Rally Sweden, Eerik Pietarinen and Miikka Anttila, former co-driver of Jari-Matti Latvala, finished fourth in the WRC3 category. Their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo is run by Team TGS Worldwide as well. In the Finnish Rally Championship, they are currently third overall. The Finnish pairing plans to compete in six rounds of the German Rally Championship as well. Thus, Eerik wants to improve his skills on tarmac and is for sure one of the main contenders for the German title.



Eerik Pietarinen/Miikka Anttila,
ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo



Filip Mareš/Jan Hloušek,
ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

Filip Mareš/Jan Hloušek ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

“This is really one of the most difficult rallies to start with on World Rally Championship level”, described Filip Mareš, ERC1 Junior Rally Champion 2019 from Czech Republic, his Swedish adventure. With a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo from Roman Kresta Racing, he finished sixth in WRC3 at his first ever Rally Sweden. For Mareš, his perspective for the 2020 season is clear: “We will enter Rally Azores, the opening round of the FIA European Rally Championship, which is our award rally for winning the ERC1 Junior category last year. After that, I would love to do more WRC rallies. But first we have to find the necessary budget.”

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Harri and Kalle Rovannerä

Right now, 19 years old Kalle Rovannerä is the shooting star of rallying! Maybe it's because rallying is in his genes – his father Harri was a world class rally driver himself and competed in a ŠKODA FABIA WRC as a factory driver for the ŠKODA Red Bull Team in 2006. Little Kalle drove rally cars since he could walk. He won the WRC2 Pro category of the FIA World Rally Championship in 2019 with ŠKODA. It is definitely only a question of time, before he could be World Rally Champion.

Petter and Oliver Solberg

Oliver Solberg's dad is a rally icon, incredibly professional, smart and successful. Petter Solberg became FIA World Rally Champion in 2003, mother Pernilla was as well successfully competing in international and national rallies. Winning Rally Liepāja at the age of 17 in 2019, Solberg junior became the youngest driver ever to win a round of the FIA European Rally Championship. At his debut at Rally Sweden, only a puncture on the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo during the last stage stopped him from taking a WRC3 podium position. Oliver, in cooperation with ŠKODA Motorsport, will compete in selected rounds of the WRC3 Championship 2020. But there is a lot more to come.

Sebastian and Emil Lindholm

Emil Lindholm is one of the rising stars out of the seemingly endless pool of fast Finnish rally drivers. In 2020, he is competing with a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo – and was quick from the start. At Arctic Rally, first round of the Finnish Championship, a small off during the last stage cost him victory, he eventually finished third. He won the next round and is currently lying second in the championship. At Rally Sweden, he finished only five seconds behind the winner of the WRC3 category. His father Sebastian Lindholm, also called "Basti", was an international successful driver and on top of that involved in the development and test program of the ŠKODA FABIA S2000.

Kalle (left) and Harri Rovannerä

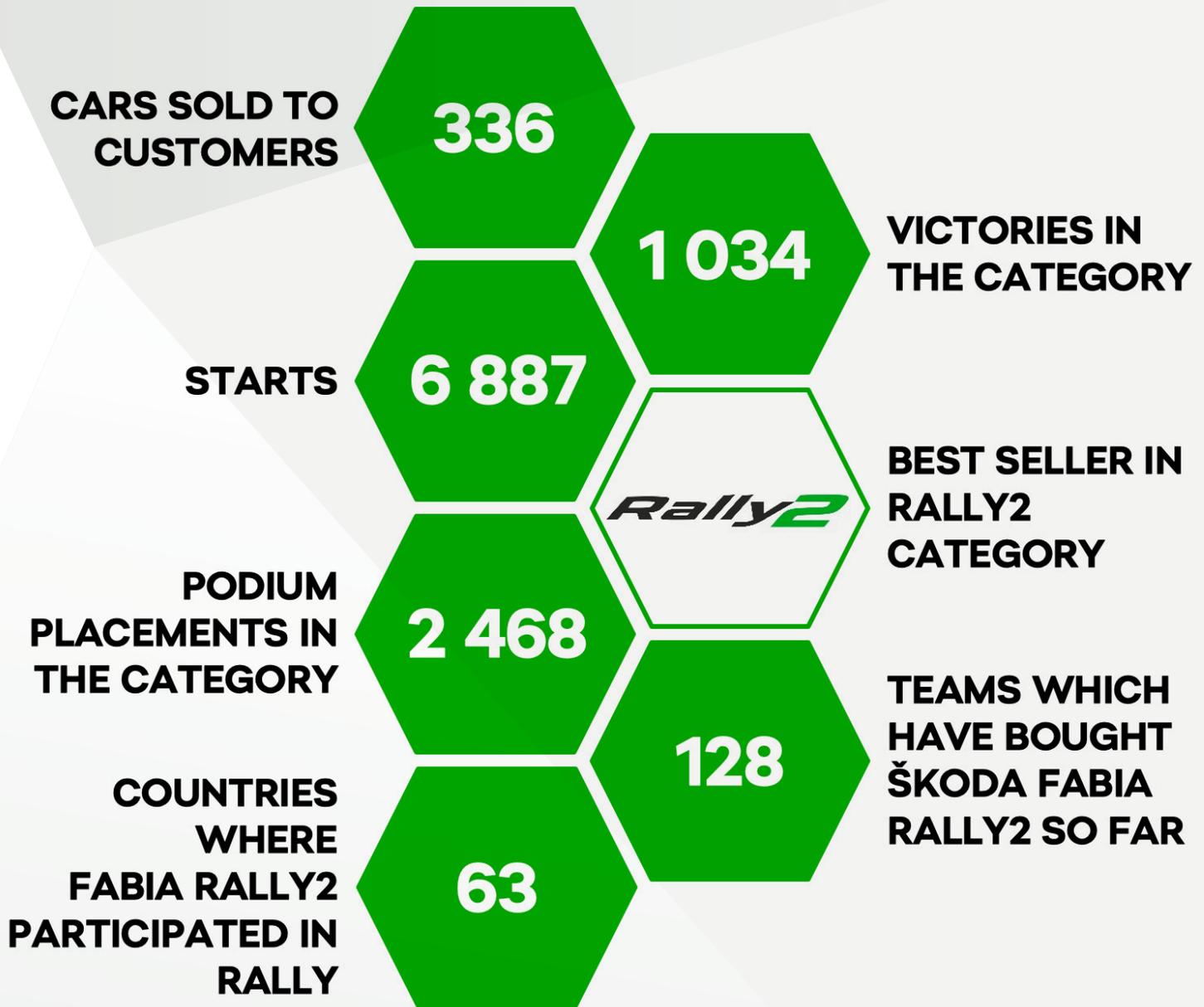


Petter Solberg (left), co-driver Aaron Johnston and Oliver Solberg



Emil (left) and Sebastian Lindholm

STATISTICS: THE ONGOING SUCCESS OF THE ŠKODA FABIA IN RALLYING

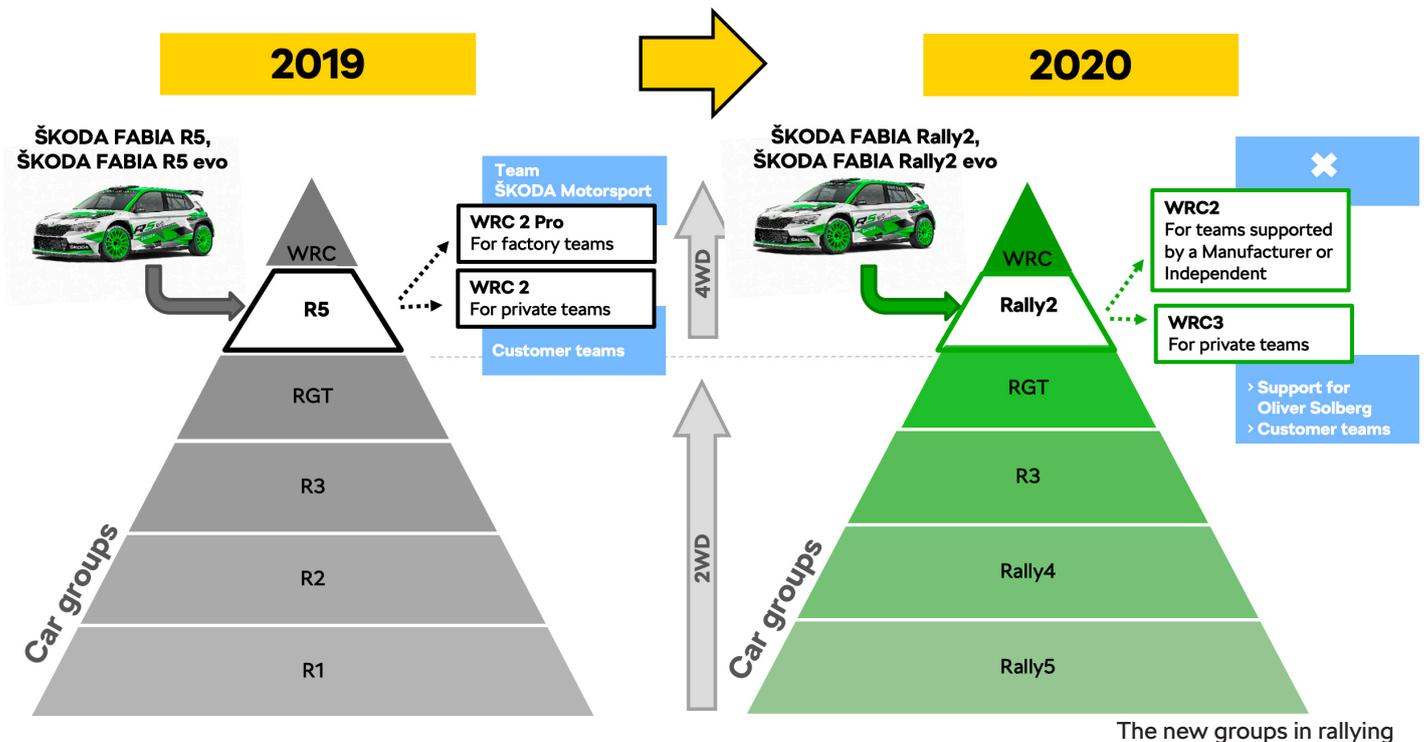


WHAT'S NEW:

THE NEW “RALLY PYRAMID” OF THE MOTORSPORT ASSOCIATION FIA – AND WHY THE ŠKODA FABIA R5 EVO IS NOW CALLED ŠKODA FABIA RALLY2 EVO

Changes in FIA Rally pyramid

Car groups, categories and name of the car



For 2020, the International Motorsport Association FIA implemented a new group system in international rallying. Due to a this so-called “Rally Pyramid” for example R5 cars have been renamed to Rally2. Therefore, the correct descriptions are as follows:

1. The RC2 class technically still exists and describes rally cars, with for example 1,6-litre, turbo-charged engines and all-wheel-drive.
2. Because they are representing the second highest group in the world of rallying, these formerly called R5 cars are renamed Rally2 cars.
3. On FIA World Rally Championship level, Rally2 covers two categories: WRC2 for factory or factory supported teams, while WRC3 is dedicated for private teams.

In a nutshell: Rally2 cars are offering fascinating rally sport, which is accessible for private teams. The cars are eligible for numerous FIA and national championships worldwide. So far, ŠKODA alone sold 336 R5/Rally2 spec cars.

> HISTORY

27 YEARS AGO

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At Rally Sweden 1993, Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross (CZE/CZE) won A5 class and finished 16th overall, competing in a front wheel driven ŠKODA FAVORIT 136L. With Emil Triner/Jiří Klíma (CZE/CZE) finishing in 18th place, the Czech brand even celebrated a double class victory.



Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross (CZE/CZE),
ŠKODA FAVORIT 136L

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