

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Rally Finland: Private ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crews aim for another class win for the Czech brand

- › ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo drivers Emil Lindholm, Teemu Asunmaa and Mikko Heikkilä are among the favourites for WRC3 category at FIA World Rally Championship's tenth round
- › Rally Finland is not part of the program for WRC2 overall top two, Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) and Marco Bulacia (BOL) of ŠKODA Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT
- › From 2015 to 2019, ŠKODA FABIA crews always achieved class wins in Jyväskylä

Mladá Boleslav, 28. September 2021 – Since 2015, crews driving the Rally2 variant of the ŠKODA FABIA have always celebrated class wins at the Finnish round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). This year's event (1 – 3 October 2021) is not part of the program for current WRC2 drivers' classification leader Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) and his overall second placed teammate Marco Bulacia (BOL). With the duo of ŠKODA Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT absent, all eyes are on private ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crews competing in category WRC3. Finnish local heroes Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen, Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen and Mikko Heikkilä/Topi Luhtinen are among the favourites for category victory.

Rally Finland is back in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). After a COVID-19 related break last year, the "Finnish Gravel Grand Prix" is the tenth round of the 2021 season. The ultra-fast tracks in the vicinity of Jyväskylä were always a proving ground for young talented Finnish drivers. 2015 and 2016, ŠKODA Motorsport factory driver Esapekka Lappi won the WRC2 category, Jari Huttunen and Eerik Pietarinen, both competing with privately entered ŠKODA FABIA, won the category the following two years. 2019, the winner of the WRC2 PRO category was ŠKODA Motorsport's shooting star Kalle Rovanperä, while the Russian talent Nikolay Gryazin (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) broke the Finnish dominance by winning the WRC2 category for private drivers the same year.

This year, the focus of the ŠKODA fans lies on WRC3, the category for strictly private drivers. Locals Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) had a difficult time in the 2021 WRC3 season. But Emil Lindholm, as brand ambassador supported by ŠKODA Finland, found fresh motivation by finishing the category third at the recent Acropolis Rally Greece at the wheel of the Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. On their home event, they will face tough opposition from their compatriots and brand colleagues Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen and Mikko Heikkilä/Topi Luhtinen. Although his only appearance at Rally Finland is already seven years ago, Pepe López also wants to compete for the top positions. The young Spaniard, sharing Rallye Team Spain's ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo with co-driver Borja Odriozola, aims to improve his seventh position in the current WRC3 points standings. Among the 27 Rally2 cars on the entry list, 13 crews rely on the Rally2 version of the FABIA, making ŠKODA again the most popular brand in this class.

Rally Finland offers 19 special stages totalling roughly 287 kilometres. In the hilly woodlands around Jyväskylä, numerous jumps present the drivers with a real challenge. After the opening Super Special Stage on Friday in the streets close to the rally centre in Jyväskylä, the leg will run over six special stages covering 89 kilometres. The longest day of the rally will be the Saturday with

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nine stages totalling nearly 152 kilometres. Sunday will bring the final decision with four stages, before the winner is expected on the podium at around 4h15 pm local time.

## **Did you know, that...**

...the event first took place in 1951 under the name "Jyväskylän Suurajot", translating roughly to "Grand Prix of Jyväskylä"?

...the event was called "Rally of the Thousand Lakes" from 1959 to 1996, before it was re-named again to Rally Finland?

...in 1973 the "Rally of the Thousand Lakes" was one of the founding events for the World Rally Championship for Manufacturers?

...the biggest jump ever was achieved 1975 by former rallycross driver Jussi Kynsilehto, who (with legendary British motoring journalist Martin Holmes as co-driver) allegedly flew for 72 metres?

...Finnish drivers so far won 55 out of the 69 editions of their home event?

## **Top-3 overall WRC2/Drivers (before Rally Finland)**

1. **Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 126 points**
2. **Marco Bulacia (BOL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 104 points**
3. Mads Østberg (NOR), Citroën C3 Rally2, 96 points

## **Top-3 overall WRC2/Teams (before Rally Finland)**

1. **Toksport WRT (ŠKODA), 211 points**
2. M-Sport Ford World Rally Team, 131 points
3. Movisport, 125 points

## **Top-3 overall WRC3/Drivers (before Rally Finland)**

1. Yohan Rossel (FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, 127 points
2. **Kajetan Kajetanowicz (POL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 112 points**
3. Nicolas Ciamin (FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, 57 points

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## 2021 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	21 – 24 January
Arctic Rally Finland powered by CapitalBox	25 – 28 February
Rally Croatia	22 – 25 April
Vodafone Rally Portugal	20 – 23 May
Rally Italia Sardegna	3 – 6 June
Safari Rally Kenya	24 – 27 June
Rally Estonia	15 – 18 July
Renties Ypres Rally Belgium	13 – 15 August
Rally Acropolis Greece	9 – 12 September
<b>Rally Finland</b>	<b>1 – 3 October</b>
RallyRACC Rally de España	14 – 17 October
Rally Monza	19 – 21 November

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#### ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Finland

Finnish local heroes Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen with a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo are among the favourites for WRC3 victory

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



#### ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Finland

Privateers Pepe López/Borja Odrizola of Rallye Team Spain want to score maximum points in the WRC3 category with their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been successful in motorsports since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include victory in the European Touring Car Championship 1981 as well as multiple titles in the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC2 category. Over the years, ŠKODA customer teams also won numerous national championships as well as titles in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC), the FIA North American and Central American Rally Championship (NACAM), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Rallye Monte-Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2009, the ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 took the rally scene by storm. The following seasons, the all-wheel-drive rally car with a 2.0 litres normally aspirated engine won 50 national and international titles worldwide. It then wrote the most successful chapter in ŠKODA's motorsport history – until its successor surpassed it. The ŠKODA FABIA R5, a production-based rally car with four-wheel drive and 1.6 litres turbo engine, was homologated in its original form by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. Further developed to ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo (homologated on 1 April 2019), the high-tech car successfully continues the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport. Due to changes in regulations, the car was re-named ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in 2020.

The success story of the ŠKODA FABIA R5 took off in 2016, when Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won the WRC2 drivers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship. The following year, Pontus Tidemand (SWE) won the WRC2 drivers' category, while ŠKODA Motorsport took the WRC2 manufacturers' title. In 2018, ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký was crowned WRC 2 drivers' champion. 2019 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC2 Pro drivers' and co-drivers' title as well as substantially supporting ŠKODA Motorsport to win the WRC2 Pro manufacturers' title. In 2020 ŠKODA customer team Toksport WRT became Team Champion of the WRC2 category.

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is successfully steering through the new decade with the NEXT LEVEL – ŠKODA STRATEGY 2030.
- › aims to be one of the five best-selling brands in Europe by 2030 with an attractive line-up in the entry-level segments and additional e-models.
- › is emerging as the leading European brand in India, Russia and North Africa.
- › currently offers its customers ten passenger-car series: the FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ, ENYAQ iV and KUSHAQ.
- › delivered over one million vehicles to customers around the world in 2020.
- › has been a member of the Volkswagen Group for 30 years. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world.
- › independently manufactures and develops not only vehicles but also components such as engines and transmissions in association with the Group.
- › operates at three sites in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia and India primarily through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine with a local partner.
- › employs more than 43,000 people globally and is active in over 100 markets.