

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



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## Rallye Monte-Carlo: ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo driver Andreas Mikkelsen goes into final leg as WRC2 leader

- › During the Saturday leg, Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Torstein Eriksen of ŠKODA Motorsport backed team Toksport WRT defended top position in the category
- › Russian crew Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) climbs to fifth position in WRC2
- › Four stages left at the FIA World Rally Championship season opener

**Monte-Carlo, 22 January 2022 – Andreas Mikkelsen is on track of repeating his 2021 WRC2 victory at Rallye Monte-Carlo. With two of three legs finished at the season opener, the Norwegian at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo holds a 22.4 seconds lead in the category. Toksport WRT teammates Nikolay Gryazin from Russia and Briton Chris Ingram also have WRC2 championship points in reach.**

While the stages on Thursday and Friday were basically completely dry, the Saturday leg finally brought some parts of typically “Monte” conditions. The 20.79 kilometres from Saint-Geniez to Thoard had stretches of snow and ice in stock. To make tyre selection even more complicated, two more stages, again consisting of basically nothing than dry tarmac, had to be driven with the same set of six tyres. “You need slicks for 95 per cent of these three stages. But with the nearly treadless tyres, you will be in deep trouble on the remaining five per cent covered in ice and snow,” Andreas Mikkelsen explained.

The reigning WRC2 Champion opted for a creative tyre selection. He left the service with four slicks mounted and two studded Pirellis in the back of his ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. Like all top drivers, Mikkelsen chose a so-called cross-over configuration for the Saint-Geniez/Thoard stage: one slick and one studded tyre on front and rear axle respectively. “The handling is a bit strange,” Mikkelsen played things down. “But it’s ok on the dry tarmac and the studs give me the necessary safety on the icy parts.”

Mikkelsen and new co-driver Torstein Eriksen started into the Saturday leg as surprising WRC2 leaders. The reason: The provisional overnight leader Stéphane Lefebvre was handed a 30 minutes penalty by the stewards for his route note crew taking “unacceptable risks” while leaving a stage. Mikkelsen/Eriksen made the best of it and defended the WRC2 lead until the leg’s finish on Saturday evening. Despite having to change a punctured wheel during the day’s last stage, the Norwegian ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew enjoys a 22.4 seconds lead going into the final leg on Sunday.

Mikkelsen’s teammates at Toksport WRT, Marco Bulacia from Bolivia and Argentine co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian, were not as lucky. They had to retire from WRC2 third overall with a technical issue (stage 12). In contrast, ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo drivers Nikolay Gryazin and Chris Ingram are back in the WRC2 points hunt. Recovering from problems during the opening leg on Thursday, Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov from Russia climbed to category fifth during Saturday. Briton Ingram and navigator Ross Whittock, the 2019 European Rally Champions,

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hold WRC2 position seven at the end of the second leg. Italians Mauro Miele/Luca Beltrame (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) lead the WRC2 Masters class for drivers 50 years and older.

Rallye Monte-Carlo is completed on Sunday with the final four stages covering 67.26 kilometres. The teams reach the finish in the Principality around 2:30 pm.

## Standings Rallye Monte-Carlo after Leg 2 (WRC2)

- 1. Mikkelsen/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 2:29:20.3 hrs.**
2. Cais/Těšínský (CZE/CZE), Ford Fiesta Rally2, +22.4 sec.
3. Munster/Louka (LUX/BEL), Hyundai i20 N Rally2, +1:06.9 min.
4. Rossel/Boulloud (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, +1:37.0 min.
- 5. Gryazin/Aleksandrov (RAF/RAF), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +1:44.3 min.**
6. Johnston/Kihurani (USA/USA), Citroën C3 Rally2, +2:01.7 min.

## Number of the day: 4

In contrast to past years, the stages of the 2022 Rallye Monte-Carlo so far consisted mostly of dry tarmac. As a consequence, demand for studded tyres is very low. Saturday saw the first opportunity, the competitors put other rubber than slicks on the cars. Like their Toksport WRT teammates, WRC2 leaders Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Torstein Eriksen over the day carried four studded tyres in the back of their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo: two in the morning and two new ones in the afternoon for the twice run Saint-Geniez/Thoard stage.

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## ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rallye Monte-Carlo

With four stages to go, Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen lead WRC2 in a Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.

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## ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rallye Monte-Carlo

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo from team Toksport WRT, Russians Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov fought back to fifth position in WRC2.

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## ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rallye Monte-Carlo

Briton Chris Ingram and co-driver Ross Whittock (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) hold seventh position in WRC2 after two of three legs.

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## ŠKODA Motorsport

- › ŠKODA has been active in motorsport since 1901, garnering success in rallies as well as circuit racing.
- › Highlights include winning the 1981 European Touring Car Championship (ETCC) with the ŠKODA 130 RS.
- › In recent years, the ŠKODA FABIA celebrated numerous successes for the Czech manufacturer on rally stages worldwide. From 2009 to 2014, the ŠKODA FABIA S2000 (2.0 naturally aspirated engine, four-wheel drive) secured 50 international titles and national rally championships. The ŠKODA FABIA S2000 also helped to win the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) three times each.
- › The ŠKODA FABIA R5 (1.6 turbo engine, four-wheel drive) continued the S2000's success story in 2015. In the following years, ŠKODA Motorsport factory drivers took multiple titles in the FIA World Rally Championship's support category WRC2/WRC2 Pro with the models ŠKODA FABIA R5 (Rally2) and ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. Titles went to Jan Kopecký (CZE), Esapekka Lappi (FIN), Pontus Tidemand (SWE), Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) and Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR). Supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, Toksport WRT became Team Champion of the WRC2 category in 2020.
- › ŠKODA Motorsport customer teams have also won titles in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), 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).
- › In 2021, Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR, Toksport WRT) took the WRC2 Drivers' Championship and the FIA European Rally Championship overall at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.
- › By the end of the 2021 season, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 (Rally2) and ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo had secured over 1,500 victories and more than 3,700 podium positions in 65 countries.

## 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 870,000 vehicles to customers around the world in 2021.
- › 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 around 43,000 people globally and is active in over 100 markets.

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