

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 1 of 5

## Rally Sweden: ŠKODA trio Mikkelsen, Gryazin and Lindholm fights for WRC2 victory

- › After winning the category at Rallye Monte-Carlo, defending WRC2 Champion Andreas Mikkelsen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) from Norway heads a 24 cars strong field
- › Mikkelsen's teammate at Toksport WRT, Marco Bulacia from Bolivia (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo), is a newcomer to Rally Sweden
- › Finnish Rally Champion Emil Lindholm (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) also competes for Toksport WRT at the series' only snow round
- › Driving the fourth Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Russian Nikolay Gryazin comes to Umeå as second overall of the newly created category WRC2 Junior

**Mladá Boleslav, 22 February 2022 – On the back of a WRC2 category victory at the season opening Rallye Monte-Carlo, ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen (NOR/NOR) heads to Rally Sweden (24 - 27 February) with the goal of another top result. After nearly 50 years run in the Värmland region, the FIA World Rally Championship's traditional winter event moved its base some 800 kilometres north to Umeå.**

Andreas Mikkelsen feels well prepared for Rally Sweden, second round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). "Rallye Monte-Carlo was the first event together with my new co-driver Torstein Eriksen – it worked perfectly straight away! I also know that our ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, prepared excellently as always by Team Toksport WRT, works well on the fast snow tracks in Sweden. As the special stages around Umeå are new to the championship, the conditions will be the same for everyone. For sure it will be an exciting battle," the reigning WRC2 champion from Norway looks ahead.

Mikkelsen's teammates at ŠKODA Motorsport-backed team Toksport WRT, Nikolay Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov from Russia, finished the season opener in Monte-Carlo third overall in WRC2 and second in WRC Junior category. Although having competed at the WRC's only proper snow rally just once in the past, Gryazin is among the favourites for the category victory. "I'm looking forward to my debut with the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in Sweden. I really hope, that with the expected lower temperatures, we will once again have snow walls along the tracks. They are very good to lean the rally car on to achieve higher cornering speeds," Gryazin reveals some insights into driving techniques at winter rallies.

Also driving a Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG) are completely new to Rally Sweden. "At Rallye Monte-Carlo, we experienced some bad luck and could not score any points. I definitely want to score valuable points for the WRC2 overall and Junior classification, even when most of the competitors have more experience on snow and ice," Bulacia summarizes his goal for the second WRC round.

In contrast to the young South Americans, reigning Finnish Rally Champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) have plenty of experience on fast and snow covered forest roads. In preparation for their first WRC2 start of the season, they won the Arctic Lapland Rally in

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Page 2 of 5

similar winterly conditions. The talented mixed crew from Finland will be one to beat on the way to victory in WRC2 category at Rally Sweden.

Technically, Toksport WRT runs two independent teams. Mikkelsen and Bulacia are entered under Toksport WRT, Gryazin and Lindholm are officially listed under Toksport WRT 2. Both teams fight for championship points on their own – after all also against each other.

The rally version of the ŠKODA FABIA is very popular in Scandinavia, as the entry list for Rally Sweden shows: In the 30 entries strong field of Rally2 vehicles – including 24 WRC2 competitors –, a total of eleven crews compete with the successful rally car from Mladá Boleslav. Amongst them are also Mauro Miele/Luca Beltrame from Italy, who lead the WRC2 Masters classification. Bruno Bulacia (BOL), younger brother of Toksport WRT driver Marco Bulacia, celebrates his WRC2 debut next to experienced Spanish co-driver Marc Martí at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.

In order to guarantee the best winterly conditions, which often have been missed in recent years, Rally Sweden has moved its base from Karlstad in the southernly province of Värmland, where the event was based since the WRC's inaugural season 1973. New rally town is Umeå some 800 kilometres further north at the shores of the Baltic Sea.

The second round of the 2022 WRC season kicks off on Thursday evening (24 February) with a start ceremony in the city centre of Umeå. On Friday (25 February), the teams will tackle seven special stages. On Saturday (26 February), another eight special stages will follow before the final four special stages close the event on Sunday (27 February).

## Did you know that...

...a forerunner to Rally Sweden was held for the first time in 1950, but in mid-summer? Originally, it carried the name "Rally to the Midnight Sun" and has only been moved to its now traditional winter date in 1965.

...every crew must have a shovel on board to dig its car out of the snow in case of an off?

...the cars are equipped with tyres used in the FIA World Rally Championship only at Rally Sweden. The Pirelli tyres of the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in category WRC2 are armed with 384 Tungsten made studs each. The figure is due to the regulations which state a maximum of 20 studs per square decimetre of the tyre's surface. Meanwhile, the length of the studs may not exceed 20mm for a weight of 4 grams. Their shape must be cylindrical and they must be inserted from the outside.

...during Rally Sweden in WRC's inaugural season 1973, only winter tyres without studs were allowed? Swedish local hero and occasional ŠKODA factory driver Stig Blomqvist celebrated victory despite a loss of ten minutes early on due to a problem with the fuel pump.

... Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross won class A5 in 1993 with a ŠKODA FAVORIT 136L?

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Page 3 of 5

## Top ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo entries (with starting numbers):

- 20 Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen (NOR/NOR), Toksport WRT
- 21 Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov (RAF/RAF), Toksport WRT 2
- 22 Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (FIN/FIN), Toksport WRT 2
- 25 Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG), Toksport WRT

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

1. **Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 26 points**
2. Erik Cais (CZE), Ford Fiesta Rally2, 18 points
3. **Nikolay Gryazin (RAF), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 15 points**

## The FIA World Rally Championship 2022

Rallye Monte-Carlo	20 - 23 January
<b>Rally Sweden</b>	<b>24 - 27 February</b>
Rally Croatia	21 - 24 April
Rally Portugal	19 - 22 May
Rally Italy Sardinia	2 - 5 June
Safari Rally Kenya	23 - 26 June
Rally Estonia	14 - 17 July
Rally Finland	4 - 7 August
Ypres Rally (Belgium)	18 - 21 August
Acropolis Rally Greece	8 - 11 September
Rally New Zealand	29 September - 2 October
RallyRACC Rally de España	20 - 23 October
Rally Japan	10 - 13 November

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Page 4 of 5

## Media images:



### ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Sweden

Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen, sharing a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of team Toksport WRT, are among the favourites for WRC2 victory at the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Sweden

Spurred on by a third place in WRC2 at Rallye Monte-Carlo, Russians Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov have their sights set on another top result in team Toksport WRT's ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Sweden

Marco Bulacia from Bolivia and Argentinean co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) are new to the FIA World Rally Championship's only proper winter rally.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## 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.

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Page 5 of 5



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## 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 twelve passenger-car series: the FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ, ENYAQ iV, ENYAQ COUPÉ iV, SLAVIA 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 45,000 people globally and is active in over 100 markets.

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