



## EDITORIAL

by Michal Hrabánek, Head of ŠKODA Motorsport

**A**s you can read on the following pages, our development team is giving the next generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 the final touch. The official presentation is only weeks away. The future car is a major step for us, because it's not just an evolution of the existing model. As the current ŠKODA FABIA road car is completely new, based on a different platform than the predecessor, our engineers used the chance, to also develop the coming Rally2 variant from scratch. We are doing our best, the new car will follow the footsteps of the previous generations, of which ŠKODA Motorsport has already sold more than 450 units. We can't wait to hear your comments.

In a way, it's a strange situation for us. We are fully concentrated on the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 – and the current model is still winning rallies. The season has started very well for our customer teams worldwide, as the statistics reveal (see pages 6 and 7). Luckily, the pandemic has loosened its grip and nearly all championships are running as it used to be. ŠKODA crews are victorious in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and numerous national series. Because so many of our cars are in action basically every weekend, we have strengthened our support program. Here at ŠKODA Motorsport, our staff is fully committed to give all customers the support they need

with advice, spare parts and technical updates, even when the current situation is not easy due to ongoing problems with supply chains.

As in the past, we have a dedicated support crew present at selected WRC and ERC rounds. For the 2022 season, we have increased our offer of customer support on this level. Now we have even more engineers and technicians available to our customers (see page 4). And they are really busy. At last weekend's Vodafone Rally de Portugal alone, 22 ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 took to the gravel stages.

Enjoy reading the newest edition of our Newsletter. If there's anything, you want us to cover in the future, we would be glad if you let us know.

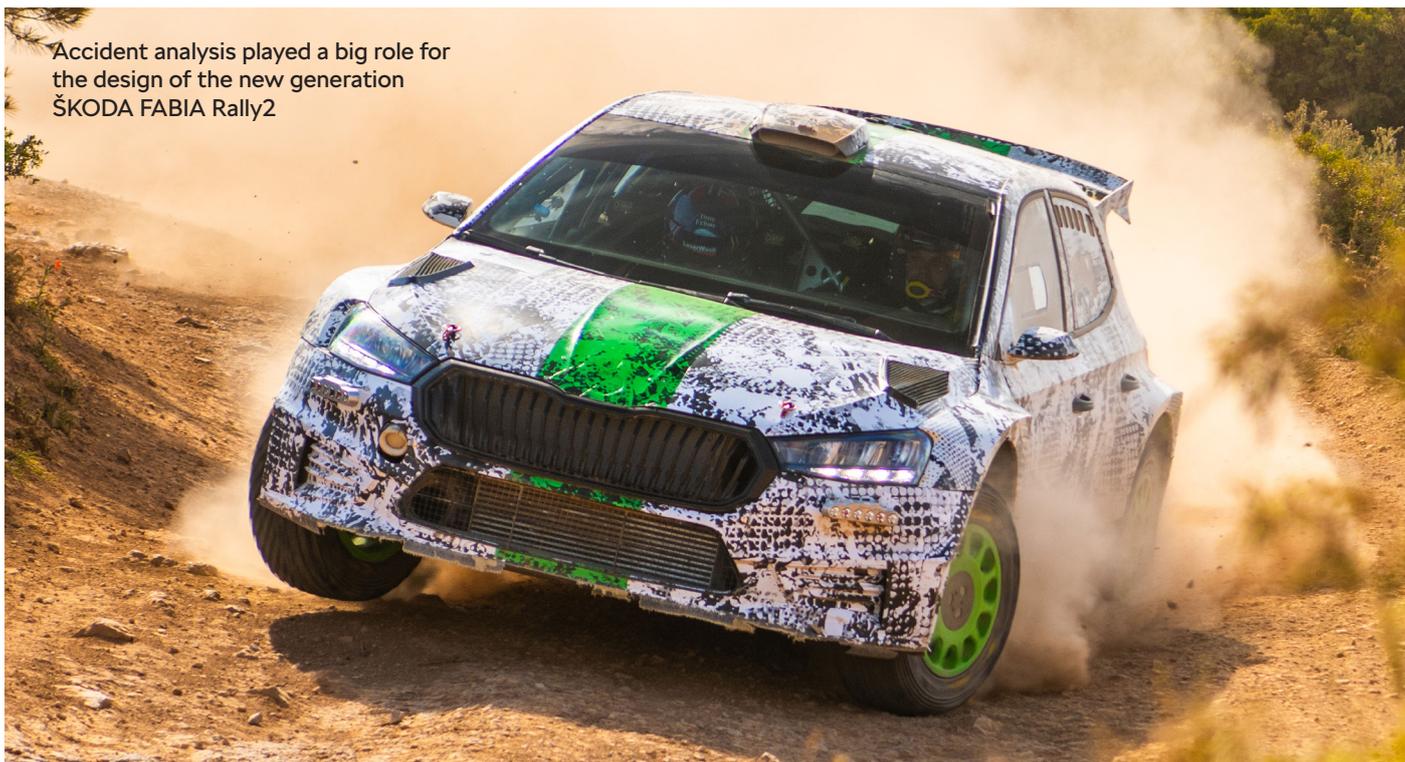


The new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 reached the final stages of development

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Accident analysis played a big role for the design of the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2



## GUARDIAN ANGEL

The new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 takes crew safety to the next level

Starting point for the future ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 is the first FABIA road car generation based on Volkswagen Group's Modular Transverse Matrix MQB-AO platform. This gave the engineers of ŠKODA Motorsport the opportunity to develop a completely new chassis for the competition version as well. "The production ŠKODA FABIA's new platform is made of high-strength and ultra-high-strength steel in areas critical for passenger safety. This is beneficial for the Rally2 car," explains Tomáš Karniš, safety engineer at ŠKODA Motorsport.

"The analysis of accidents on special stages gave us vital data to move safety standards even further". As a result, the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2's safety cell exceeds the FIA requirements in certain areas. While all aspects of the safety structure of the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 have been improved, the main goal was to significantly increase side impact safety. To meet

this target, the engineers at ŠKODA Motorsport worked on three areas: seat mountings, roll cage door cross and door panels. The left and the right side of the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 are connected by the structure of the seat holders and an additional rail. Thus, the forces of a side impact are better transferred from one side of the car to the other. "This reduces deformation of the bodyshell and the roll cage," comments Karniš. Additionally, the new



Tomáš Karniš, safety engineer at ŠKODA Motorsport

generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 features massive gussets in the roll cage's door crosses, which provide even more protection against lateral forces. The inner door skins of a Rally2 car have to be filled with energy absorbing foam. "The padding of the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 exceeds the FIA mandated volume in this area," says Tomáš Karniš.

Apart from that, the seatbelt mounting system has been improved as well. An additional roll cage tube on each side of the car has been added to further improve the strength and stiffness of the shoulder straps mounting points. Safety engineer Tomáš Karniš emphasizes: "The durability of the newly developed bodyshell is on a different level compared to our current rally car."

Scan the QR code to watch a video from testing the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2



## BIGGER IS BETTER

With a longer wheelbase, the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 gives engineers more room to improve the weight balance



Perfect weight distribution gives the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 stable handling over jumps

ŠKODA Motorsport is taking no break during the development process of the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2. Recently, the technicians concentrated on perfecting the weight distribution. In this respect, the chassis derived from the current FABIA road car gives the engineers the chance to further improve the rally car's handling characteristics. The new generation of the worldwide successful Rally2 vehicle especially benefits from the new production FABIA's longer wheel base.

As the regulations allow only minor changes in this area, the rally car takes advantages of the road car's modified

dimensions: The series production ŠKODA FABIA features a 94 millimetres longer wheelbase and 48 millimetres more in width.

Both the longer wheelbase and the overall larger dimensions give the engineers new options to position the car's main components. "The completely new chassis is one of the key factors for even better competitiveness," stresses Michal Hrabánek, Head of ŠKODA Motorsport. Jan Krasula, project leader of the develop-

Jan Krasula, project leader of the development team at ŠKODA Motorsport

ment team at ŠKODA Motorsport, adds: "To make the most out of this layout, we have started from scratch compared to the previous ŠKODA FABIA Rally2. For example, we were able to re-position the fuel tank. In the engine compartment, we took advantage of the larger space between the chassis rails. We have as well redesigned gearbox, clutch and flywheel to achieve less inertia and more efficiency. Also, the new generation ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 gets a bigger and more efficient intercooler, which would not have fit under the current car's bonnet."

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Andreas Mikkelsen in 2021 became WRC2 Drivers' champion and also won the overall title of the FIA European Rally Championship. After extensively testing ŠKODA Motorsport's development car, the Norwegian approves: "The balance of the car is really, really nice. That for example gives me a lot of confidence to push over jumps."

Scan the QR code to watch a development test on gravel



The ŠKODA Motorsport parts truck usually is stationed next to the Toksport WRT service area



## “WE ARE EXPANDING OUR PRO-CUSTOMER APPROACH”

Kateřina Hállová, Sales Support at ŠKODA Motorsport, speaks about a unique service that makes the job of private ŠKODA teams in WRC and ERC a lot easier.

### **H**ow did the idea of a ŠKODA Motorsport spare parts truck come about?

The initial impulse was to offer some new service that we could support our customers with. The idea of having a rally assistance truck full of spare parts is unique in this respect, as no other rally car manufacturer in the Rally2 group offers this service to its customers. With the truck, we participate in European rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) as well as selected FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) events. At all of these rallies, our customers can buy the spare parts they need from the truck that are not available from their

own stock. This often saves their participation in the event.

### **Did your extensive experience in running a factory team help you get this project off the ground?**

Definitely yes. When equipping the truck, we drew specifically on the factory team's competition experience. But of course the parts stock is not identical. We focused mainly on the important parts that keep a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 in the race, but consumables like bumpers, fenders, brake pads, discs and more are also in high demand. We also continuously adapt our parts range to customer requirements.

### **How many rallies are you participating in this year?**

We are scheduled to participate in ten WRC and three ERC events. For example, the rallies in Portugal and on the island of Sardinia, held close together, are a logistical challenge. But even here we can build on the experience and our colleagues in the logistics group.

### **What was the reaction from customers when you first took the truck to a rally?**

Premiere was at Rally Croatia last year. There was interest in the new project among customers right from the start. But it was only during the



The truck carries the most important parts to keep every ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 in a race

year that the teams started to get used to the truck's presence. I think that our customers quickly realised that in addition to the short-term need for parts during the rally, they could also complete their own stock and save the cost and time of sending heavy parts by courier. This works for rims, for example. For high-risk, fragile parts such as windscreens, buying from the truck reduces the risk of damage during transport by freight forwarders. We try to be as accommodating as possible in this respect. If we have space in the truck, it is no problem to create an individual order and bring it to the customer at the rally.

### **Is there any difference in the price of parts when sold in the truck?**

No difference, we sell the parts at the same price as when ordering from our warehouse at the factory.

### **How many people work in the truck?**

The truck is operated by a crew of one to two people, depending on where the rally is taking place. They are experienced mechanics who are familiar



Kateřina Hálová manages handing out and refilling of parts for the ŠKODA Motorsport customer support truck



with the truck and the parts. In addition, one of the colleagues from the sales department, who is in charge of general customer support, is also available to customers who want to buy parts from the truck.

### **How many items were sold on average?**

During the 2022 events so far, we sold on average around 150 parts.

### **Where do you see as the main benefit of the truck?**

We don't see the main benefit of the project in increasing the volume of spare parts sales, but rather in expanding our pro-customer approach. In addition to technical support, we are thus bringing our customers another unique advantage during the rallies that other manufacturers do not offer. And it is this service and approach that our customers often appreciate. Over time, the truck has become a fixture of the service area and the teams have become accustomed to its presence. For example, at one of the most recent rallies, where 19 crews with ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 competed, 16 teams purchased parts from the truck during the event. At this year's Rally Croatia, a Japanese crew even thanked us on social media for being able to finish the event with parts from our truck. We're really happy about that because that's exactly our goal: to have as many of our cars as possible finish the rally.



Kajetan Kajetanowicz/  
Maciej Szczepaniak  
from Poland scored  
back-to-back second  
WRC2 positions in  
Croatia and Portugal

## CUSTOMER TEAMS SHINE

With strong drives, ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo privateers score big points at FIA World Rally Championship rounds in Croatia and Portugal

**R**ounds three and four of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) brought excellent results for ŠKODA Motorsport customer teams. Both in Croatia and in Portugal, Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak from Poland finished second in WRC2. With these results, the LOTOS Rally Team driver jumped to third place in the overall rankings. "My goal is to maintain the pace of the top drivers and I will continue my hard work in order to fight for the championship," Kajetanowicz said after a demanding Vodafone Rally de Portugal.

At Rally Croatia, also two WRC2 sub-categories went to ŠKODA crews. Finnish rally champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen drove to victory in WRC2 Junior (drivers under the age of 30) in a Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. Former European Rally Champion Armin Kremer and Dakar Rally winning co-driver Timo Gottschalk from Germany took the WRC2 Masters (drivers over the age of 50) for Austrian team Baum-schlager Rallye & Racing.

After voluntarily skipping the Croatian WRC round, reigning WRC2 Champion Andreas Mikkelsen was back at the

wheel of the Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo for Rally Portugal. Initially, the Norwegian and co-driver Torstein Eriksen were leading the category, but had to retire due to a rare engine problem at the end of day one. Thus, Kajetanowicz/Szczepaniak again took the honours of best-placed ŠKODA crew as second in WRC2.

During the Portuguese classic, where the 50th WRC season was celebrated with a meeting of world champion drivers and co-drivers from the past, two ŠKODA crews fiercely competed for victory in WRC2 Junior. During leg one, Chris Ingram/Craig Drew from the UK and Polish duo Mikołaj Marczyk/Szymon Gospodarczyk swapped top position several times. Punctures eventually decided in favour of the Britons, who shared a Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. Chris Ingram, the 2019 FIA European Rally Champion, also took over the WRC2 Junior overall lead. Next round is Rally Italia Sardegna (2-5 June). On the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, defending champion Andreas Mikkelsen, WRC2 Junior top dog Chris Ingram and WRC2 Masters front-runner Armin Kremer will be back in action.



After a WRC2 Junior victory at Rally Portugal, Chris Ingram is the new overall leader of the category reserved for drivers under the age of 30

# OTHER RECENT RALLY RESULTS



## European Rally Championship ERC:

After winning Azores Rally and finishing second at Rally Islas Canarias, Spanish driver Efrén Llarena leads the FIA European Rally Championship overall. Llarena shares a team MRF ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo with Sara Fernández.



## NACAM: A handful of international invitees fought

for victory at Guanajuato based Rally of Nations in Mexico, which was also part of the North and Central America Championship (NACAM). Norwegian WRC regular Mads Østberg and co-driver Johan Johanson drove a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to overall victory. Locals Benito Guerra/Daniel Cué finished third in another ŠKODA.



## Austria: Second victory in

a row for Simon Wagner in the Austrian Championship. Together with co-driver Gerald Winter he won WeinbergerHolz Lavanttal Rallye in a EUROSOL Racing Team run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.



**Bolivia:** Roberto Saba and co-driver Leonardo Suaya (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2) won Rally Andaluz, second round of the Bolivian Championship. Sebastian Careaga/Carlos Montero came second in another ŠKODA.



**Chile:** Jorge Martínez Fontena/Alberto Alvarez (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2) won Rally del Bio Bio, opening round of the Chilean Championship.



**Croatia:** Three ŠKODA crews finished on the podium of Rally Opatija, second round of the Croatian Championship. Austrian Simon Wagner and co-driver Pia Šumer (EUROSOL Racing Team) won ahead of Péter Osváth/Tamás Papp from Hungary (R-Sport Management) and Germans Stefan Göttig/Natalie Solbach Schmidt.



**Czech Republic:** Eight ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo finished inside the top 10 of Czech Rally Championship round Rallye Šumava Klatovy. ŠKODA Motorsport

development driver Jan Kopecký and navigator Jan Hloušek (Agrotec ŠKODA Rally Team) won, followed by Dominik Střítecký/Jiří Hovorka (ACA Škoda Vančík Motorsport) and Filip Mareš/Radovan Bucha (Laureta Auto Škoda Team). Kopecký/Hloušek extended their championship lead with another victory at Rally Český Krumlov.



## Finland: 1-2-3 for ŠKODA

Motorsport customer team TGS Worldwide at SM Mad-Croc Länsirannikon Ralli, fourth round of the Finnish championship. Teemu Asunmaa/Ville Mannisenmäki beat defending champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen and Mikko Heikkilä/Saamu Valeri.



## France: Two double

victories for ŠKODA customer teams in the French Gravel Championship. Mathieu Franceschi and co-driver Baud Lucie won Rallye Terre des Causses and Rallye Castine-Terre d'Occitanie, both times followed by Matthieu and Mathilde Margailan.

Efrén Llarena/Sara Fernández (Team MRF Tyres) lead the FIA European Rally Championship



Simon Wagner/Gerald Winter (EUROSOL Racing) won Austrian championship round WeinbergerHolz Lavanttal Rallye



 **Germany:** Second win in a row for ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew Philip Geipel/Katrin Becker-Brugger in the German Championship. After winning ADAC Rallye Erzgebirge and ADAC ACTRONICS Rallye Sulingen, they dominantly head the overall standings.

 **Italy:** Two victories for ŠKODA customer teams in the Italian Rally Championship. Fabio Andolfi/Manuel Fenoli won Rally Sanremo. Damiano De Tommaso/Giorgia Ascalone (Meteco Corse) took the Targa Florio-Rally Internazionale di Sicilia. Simone Campedelli/Gianfrancesco Maria Rappa (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) also won Rally Elba-Trofeo Gruppo Gino counting towards the separate tarmac championship. In the gravel championship round Rally Adriatico, three ŠKODA crews entered the podium. Paolo Andreucci/Rudy Biani (M33) won ahead of Enrico Oldrati/Elia de Guio (MS Munaretto) and Giacomo Costenaro/Justin Bardini (Hawk Racing Club).

 **Japan:** Sharing a Rally Team Aicello run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2, former Formula One

driver Heikki Kovalainen from Finland and Japanese co-driver Sae Kitagawa won Japanese Championship rounds Tour de Kyushu in Karatsu and YUHO RALLY TANGO supported by Nissin Mfg. At YUHO RALLY TANGO, Osamu Fukunaga/Misako Saida drove Three Five Motorsport's ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 to second position.

 **Mauritius:** Rajesh Ramdenee/Richey Beenessreesingh drove a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 to victory at Hashim Maudarbocus Rally Memorial Rally on the island of Mauritius.

 **Poland:** Double victory for ŠKODA crews in the Polish Championship opening round Rajd Świdnicki-Krause: Kacper Wróblewski and co-driver Jakub Wróbel won ahead of Grzegorz Grzyb/Adrian Sadowski.

 **Portugal:** ERC round Azores Rally also counted towards the Portuguese Championship. Ricardo Moura/António Costa (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) won the national classification. Rali Terras D'Arborerirera ended with victory for Miguel Correia/Eduardo Jorge

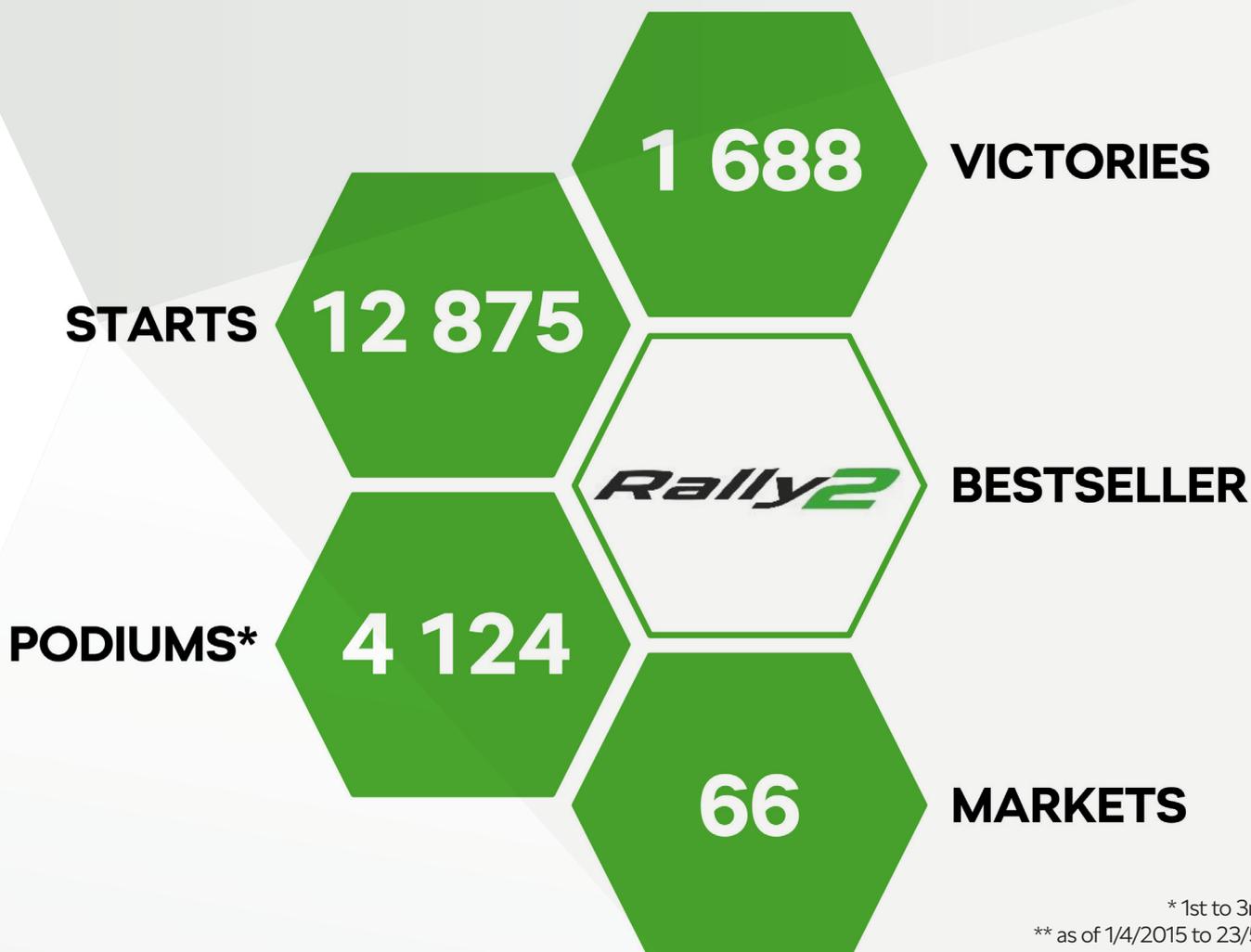
Carvalho of ŠKODA Motorsport customer team ARC Sport. The Racing Factory's Armindo Araújo/Luís Ramalho (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) finished second in both events.

 **Romania:** Two ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 on the podium of Raliul Maramureşului, first round of the Romanian Championship. Hungarian crew Ignat Isaev/Yordan Yordanov won, locals Andrei Girtofan and co-driver Doru Calin Vraja came third. At the third round, Raliul Argeşului Catena, it was an all ŠKODA podium: Sebastian Barbu/Bogdan Iancu won, followed by Andrei Girtofan/Doru Calin Vraja and Mihai Manole/Marc Banca.

 **Sweden:** It might sound strange, but there are tarmac rallies in Sweden! The single stage city event in Uddevalla was won by Mattias Olsson/Erik Gustafsson (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo).

 **Turkey:** 1-2 for the Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo at Bodrum Rally, opening round of the Turkish Championship. Avcioglu Orhan and co-driver Burcin Korkmaz lead home Cem Alakoç/Emir Sahin.

# FACTS ABOUT THE ŠKODA FABIA RALLY2 AND ŠKODA FABIA RALLY2 EVO\*\*



\* 1st to 3rd place

\*\* as of 1/4/2015 to 23/5/2022



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