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Rally Estonia: ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo driver Andreas Mikkelsen is back in victory lane

- › At the FIA World Rally Championship's seventh round, reigning WRC2 champion Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Torstein Eriksen celebrate third category win of the season
- › Andreas Mikkelsen takes lead in WRC2 Drivers' classification from Kajetan Kajetanowicz (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo), who finishes in fifth position
- › Finns Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen drive a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to victory in WRC2 Junior class

Tartu (EST), 17 July 2022 – Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Torstein Eriksen won WRC2 at Rally Estonia, seventh round of the FIA World Rally Championship. Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of Team Toksport WRT to third category victory of the season, defending WRC2 Drivers' champion Mikkelsen is back on top of the overall rankings.

During the first leg on the fast gravel stages in the Tartu region, four crews swapped the WRC2 lead. Amongst them: Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen (NOR/NOR) and Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (FIN/FIN), both crews in Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. In stage 8, reigning Finnish champion Lindholm collected a puncture and lost nearly a minute. Consequently, Mikkelsen took over top spot of the category. "I pushed when I felt comfortable and played it safe when the risk of punctures was high with the ruts," Mikkelsen summed up his day.

Marco Bulacia at the wheel of another Toksport WRT run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo ended the Friday leg third WRC2. The 21 years old Bolivian and Spanish co-driver Diego Vallejo also lead the WRC2 Junior category ahead of Lindholm/Hämäläinen. Kajetan Kajetanowicz and co-driver Maciej Szczepaniak (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) from Poland, who came to Rally Estonia as WRC2 overall leaders, finished the first leg in sixth position.

The second leg saw Mikkelsen/Eriksen and Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN) fight for the WRC2 lead. The ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew from Norway won four stages, surviving a scare when a tyre deflated. Mikkelsen/Eriksen started into Saturday with a 12.1 seconds advantage over their Finnish rivals. When the dust had settled in the evening, the gap stood at 10.6 seconds – just 1.5 seconds was Suninen's reward for a full day of hard work. "It will be a big fight with Teemu on Sunday," Mikkelsen looked ahead. "Maybe I have to increase the speed a little bit, in case he goes all out."

Behind the two front-runners, things basically had been settled. Bulacia/Vallejo defended third position against the charging Lindholm/Hämäläinen duo with Kajetanowicz/Szczepaniak comfortably in sixth.

The final leg brought rain, which made conditions on the stages, especially the grip level, very unpredictable. Numerous crews ended off the road, including WRC2 Junior leaders Bulacia/Vallejo. Unimpressed, Mikkelsen attacked in the morning, increasing his lead over Suninen. A more cautious approach later on brought his lead down to 3.2 seconds going into the rally ending Power Stage. "There was a lot of water in the lines and I had a lot of aquaplaning," Mikkelsen described.

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But the last 15.95 kilometres couldn't stop him and co-driver Torstein Eriksen from winning WRC2 for the third time this season. With this success, Andreas Mikkelsen regains top spot of the WRC2 overall rankings lead. He leads Kajetan Kajetanowicz, who eventually came home fifth in WRC2, by three points

Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen finished third overall, at the same time winning the WRC2 Junior category. Chilean Emilio Fernández and Spanish co-driver Axel Coronado Jiménez, sharing another ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of team Toksport WRT, followed in sixth position. Italians Mauro Miele/Luca Beltrame of ŠKODA Motorsport customer team DreamOne Racing celebrated victory in the WRC2 Masters class.

In its third edition, Rally Estonia again lived up to its reputation as one of the fastest rallies on the championship calendar. Despite several show stages with lots of tight corners and short straights, the overall average speed for WRC2 winners Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen was 101.5 kph.

Mega-fast gravel stages make up the next round of the FIA World Rally Championship as well. Rally Finland (4-7 August 2022) is less than three weeks away.

Result Rally Estonia (WRC2)

1. **Mikkelsen/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 3:05:30.8 hrs**
2. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20N Rally2, +25.3 sec
3. **Lindholm/Hämäläinen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +2:03.0 min**
4. Huttunen/Lukka (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta Rally2, +3:27.0 min
5. **Kajetanowicz/Szczepaniak (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +5:06.9 min**
6. **Fernández/Jiménez (CHL/ESP), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +5:29.2 min**

Number of the rally: 117.9

Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen powered their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo through stage 4 with a time of 10:55.2 minutes. In other words: The average speed of the reigning Finnish champions was 117.9 kph.

Top-5 overall WRC2 Open/Drivers (after 7 of 13 rounds)

1. **Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 79 points**
2. **Kajetan Kajetanowicz (POL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 76 points**
3. Yohan Rossel (FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, 63 points
4. **Nikolay Gryazin (ANA), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 52 points**
5. Jari Huttunen (FIN), Ford Fiesta Rally2, 45 points

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ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Estonia

Norwegian Toksport WRT crew Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) took the WRC2 lead during the first leg and defended it until the finish after 24 stages.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Estonia

Two ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crews on the podium: Winners Torstein Eriksen and Andreas Mikkelsen celebrate with third placed Reeta Hämäläinen and Emil Lindholm (from left to right).

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Estonia

Reigning Finnish champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) finished third in WRC2 for team Toksport WRT, at the same winning the WRC2 Junior classification.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Estonia

Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL) drove LOTOS Rally Team's ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to fifth position in WRC2.

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ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Estonia

Toksport WRT's Marco Bulacia/Diego Vallejo (BOL/ESP) fought for WRC2 Junior victory. But the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew didn't make it to the finish.

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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.

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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