

Rally Croatia: Seven Škoda Fabia finish inside top 10 of the WRC2 category

- › **Reigning WRC2 Champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) come third of the category at the FIA World Rally Championship's fourth round**
- › **Previous WRC2 overall leader Oliver Solberg and co-driver Elliott Edmondson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) choose not to score championship points in Croatia; they post three fastest stage times in class RC2**
- › **Three Škoda crews on both podiums of WRC2 Challenger and WRC Masters Cup classification**

Zagreb (HRV), 23 April 2023 – Škoda crews took the majority of the points scoring positions in WRC2 category at Rally Croatia (20-23 April 2023). In total seven of the new Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 and the predecessor model Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo featured inside the top 10 of the FIA World Rally Championship's (WRC) fourth round. Highest placed Škoda crew in WRC2 were Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov in second position. Categories WRC2 Challenger and WRC Masters Cup were dominated by drivers at the wheel of the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2.

Cars dragging dirt onto the racing line through corner cutting mad the asphalt stages in the vicinity of Croatia's capital Zagreb extremely difficult. Changing weather conditions during the second leg added to the challenge, leading to different tire strategies among the WRC2 front runners. "A lot of gravel and mud on the road. It is really hard knowing what the grip level is," reigning WRC2 Champion Emil Lindholm described. The Finn and co-driver Reeta Hämäläinen eventually drove the team Toksport run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 to third position in WRC2.

Also from Finland and team mate to Lindholm, 21 year-old Sami Pajari struggled with road conditions as well. "I'm trying to push in some places, but I should be braver," he admitted. Pajari and co-driver Enni Mälkönen, the reigning WRC3 champions, brought the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 home fifth in WRC2. They were followed by Gus Greensmith and Jonas Andersson, who won WRC2 at Guanajuato Rally México on their first WRC event with the Toksport WRT run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2. The British-Swedish duo lost valuable time with two punctures and a bend suspension after hitting a curb. Posting four fastest WRC2 stage times – and bagging three extra championship points for winning the Power Stage – Greensmith summarized: "I'm happy with the performance. Just where we are in the overall result is not where we want to be."

Oliver Solberg from Sweden and British co-driver Elliott Edmondson featured in the overall classification of the RC2 class, but not in the WRC2 rankings. The WRC2 winners of Rally Sweden opted to not nominate Rally Croatia as one of their maximum seven WRC2 points scoring events. In contrast to team mates Lindholm and Pajari, Solberg was even expecting more dirt on the road. As a consequence, he was not happy with the setup he choose for his Toksport WRT run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2. "The setup of the differentials just doesn't suit," the 21 year old son of former FIA World Rally Champion Petter Solberg revealed already after the first leg. Unfortunately, he had to live with it for the whole 301 competitive kilometres – the WRC regulations don't allow changing the differential settings during a rally. Solberg/Edmondson also lost some time due to a puncture. Nevertheless, they posted the fastest RC2 time on three of the 20 stages and finished third of the class.

Former European Rally Champion Armin Kremer once again listened to the pace notes read out by daughter Ella. The German veteran drove the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Baumschlagger

Rallye&Racing not only to seventh position WRC2. He also was awarded the points for victory in the WRC Masters Cup, which is reserved for drivers over the age of 50. The Kremers were joined on the podium by two more Škoda crews, Johannes Keferböck/Ilka Minor from Austria and Zoltán László/Gábor Zsiros from Hungary.

Another category dominated by Škoda crews was WRC2 Challenger, where only drivers are eligible for points, who have not yet won a WRC2 or WRC3 title as well as not previously been nominated to score manufacturer points. The WRC2 Challenger podium was completely in the hands of crews relying on the new Škoda Fabia RS Rally2. Positions four and five also went to Škoda crews.

From Croatia in the Eastern part of Europe the WRC2 competitors travel next to Matosinhos at the Atlantic coast. Vodafone Rally Portugal (11-14 May 2023) kicks off a series of seven gravel rallies in a row.

Rally Croatia, 20-23 April 2023, Result WRC2

- 1 Yohan Rossel/Arnaud Dunand (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, 2:58:45.6 hours
- 2 Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov (ANA/ANA), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +16.1 seconds**
- 3 Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (FIN/FIN), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +1:27.5 minutes**
- 4 Adrien Fourmaux/Alexandre Coria (FRA/FRA), Ford Fiesta MkII Rally2, +2:18.5 minutes
- 5 Sami Pajari/Enni Mälkönen (FIN/FIN), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +2:26.6 minutes**
- 6 Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson (GBR/SWE), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +5:12.4 minutes**
- 7 Armin Kremer/Ella Kremer (DEU/DEU), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +11:24.2 minutes**
- 8 Norbert Herczig/Ramón Ferencz (HUN/HUN), Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo, +13:19.5 minutes**
- 9 Johannes Keferböck/Ilka Minor (AUT/AUT), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +16:55.9 minutes**

Number of the rally: 13

Crews using the new Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 set the fastest time of the RC2 class on 13 of the rally's 20 stages.

Overall standings WRC2 Drivers (after 4 of 13 rounds)

- 1 Yohan Rossel (FRA/Citroën), 53 points (from 2 of maximum 7 events)
- 2 Emil Lindholm (FIN/Škoda), 44 points (3/7)**
- 3 Oliver Solberg (SWE/Škoda), 43 points (2/7)**
- 4 Nikolay Gryazin (ANA/Škoda), 38 points (2/7)**
- 5 Gus Greensmith (GBR/Škoda), 37 points (2/7)**

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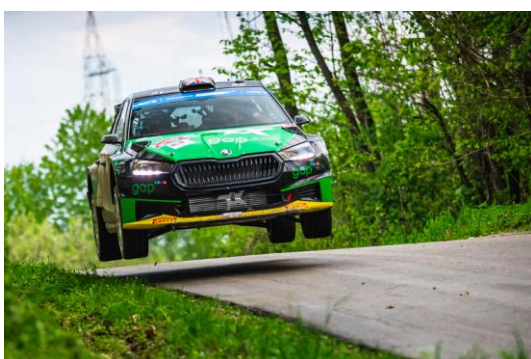
Škoda Motorsport at Rally Croatia
Reigning WRC2 Champions Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hämäläinen (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Toksport WRT) from Finland collected valuable championship points as third in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda Motorsport at Rally Croatia
21 year-old Sami Pajari and co-driver Enni Mälkönen from Finland drove the Toksport WRT run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 to fifth position in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda Motorsport at Rally Croatia
On the back of winning WRC2 at Guanajuato Rally México, Gus Greensmith (GBR) and co-driver Jonas Andersson (SWE) experienced a difficult event. They reached the finish sixth in WRC2 with the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Toksport WRT.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda Motorsport at Rally Croatia
Rally Croatia was not one of the nominated WRC2 points scoring events for Oliver Solberg and co-driver Elliott Edmondson. Sharing a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Toksport WRT, the Swedish-British duo was classified third in RC2 class.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda Motorsport at Rally Croatia
Former FIA European Rally Champion Rally Champion Armin Kremer and pace-note-reading daughter Ella finished first of the WRC Masters Cup classification. The German veteran drove Baumschlager Rallye&Racing's Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 also to a fine seventh position in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto

Škoda Motorsport

- › Škoda has been active in motorsport since 1901, garnering success in rallies as well as in circuit racing.
- › Highlights include winning the 1981 European Touring Car Championship (ETCC) with the Škoda 130 RS.
- › Since 2009, the Škoda Fabia celebrated numerous successes for the Czech manufacturer on rally stages worldwide.
- › Until 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 successor model Škoda Fabia R5 (1.6 turbo engine, four-wheel drive) entered the scene in 2015. Later renamed to Škoda Fabia Rally2 and followed by the further developed Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo, the model collected nearly 2,000 victories in 68 countries until the end of the 2022 season.
- › During this period, Škoda Motorsport factory drivers Jan Kopecký (CZE), Esapekka Lappi (FIN), Pontus Tidemand (SWE) and Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) won the FIA World Rally Championship's support category WRC2/WRC2 Pro. Škoda Motorsport also took the WRC2/WRC2 Pro Manufacturers' title five times in a row from 2015 to 2019.
- › Beginning with the 2020 season, Škoda Motorsport changed its strategy to supporting private teams. The success story continued: Driving a Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo run by Toksport WRT, Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) und Emil Lindholm (FIN) became WRC2 Champions in 2021 and 2022. The Škoda Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT also won the WRC2 Teams' title three times in a row from 2020 to 2022.
- › 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).

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 important growth markets such as India or 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 731,000 vehicles to customers around the world in 2022.
- › 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; has additional production capacity 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.