

Safari Rally Kenya: Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 drivers Oliver Solberg and Gus Greensmith fight for WRC2 victory

- › Toksport WRT crew Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) targets second WRC2 win of the season at the FIA World Rally Championship's third round.
- › Teammates Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) have chosen the toughest WRC event to kick off their 2024 WRC2 campaign.
- › Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2), who won WRC2 on the African plains in 2023 and 2022, also start their season.

Mladá Boleslav, 26. March 2024 – After the Alpine roads of Rallye Monte-Carlo and the full-snow Swedish round, the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) heads to the rough gravel of East Africa: Safari Rally Kenya (28-31 March 2024) is next on the calendar for the WRC2 teams. Among the favourites are three Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews: Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson (SWE/GBR) and Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson (GBR/SWE) of Germany-based team Toksport WRT as well as team RaceSeven's Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL), who won WRC2 at Safari Rally Kenya in 2022 and 2023.

He is only 22 years old, yet Oliver Solberg already is one of the most experienced competitors when it comes to Safari Rally Kenya. The Škoda Motorsport development driver tackles the championship's only African round already for the fourth time. But luck was not always on his side. Last year, the young Swede and British co-driver Elliott Edmondson were fastest of the RC2 class on 17 of the event's 19 stages. But after they broke the suspension of their Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo, they finished only second in the category. Solberg's target for the upcoming edition of the Kenyan classic is clear: "The Safari Rally Kenya is the toughest in the calendar, the road conditions are often unpredictable. It's all about a sensible speed, taking care about the car and avoiding mistakes. The Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 is the right car for this challenge." After WRC2 victory at Rally Sweden, Oliver Solberg currently joins the overall lead of the category with Rally Monte-Carlo winner Yohan Rossel.

Competing for team Toksport WRT as well, Gus Greensmith has already two "Safaris" under his belt. Together with Swedish co-driver Jonas Andersson, the Briton starts his 2024 WRC2 campaign in Kenya. Greensmith has set himself high goals: "It's fantastic to be with Škoda again. We had great success together in 2023. But, instead of finishing second in WRC2, my target is to be one place higher and win the title."

Like Greensmith, Kajetan Kajetanowicz did not take part in Rallye Monte-Carlo and Rally Sweden, Safari Rally Kenya will be his first WRC2 event of the season. "Kajto" and navigator Maciej Szczepaniak from Poland, who share a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 prepared by team RaceSeven, are a step ahead of Solberg/Edmondson and Greensmith/Andersson: They won WRC2 at Safari Rally Kenya already twice in 2022 and 2023. Last year, Kajetanowicz laid the foundation for the WRC2

Challenger title with this victory. "However, I return to Africa with a humble attitude – this is not a stroll in a park but an extremely unpredictable rally," he looks ahead.

Škoda is well represented in the 13 cars strong WRC2 field. In addition to Solberg, Kajetanowicz and Greensmith, five more drivers rely on the Rally2 car from Mladá Boleslav. Daniel Chwist from Poland and Miguel Díaz Aboitiz from Spain go head to head with locals Karan Patel, Samman Singh Vohra and Aakif Virani.

After being held in June for the last three years, Safari Rally Kenya returns to its traditional Easter date for this year's edition. As a consequence, the weather could be even more unpredictable. Heavy rainfall can cause tricky water crossings, turning the normally dusty gravel stages easily into a proper mud bath. Therefore, the regulations for once allow the teams to equip their cars with so-called "snorkels". The purpose-built intake on top of the windscreen makes sure, the engine is fed with air, not water.

Safari Rally Kenya features 19 special stages covering 367.76 kilometres. As an appetizer on Thursday (28 March), a short show stage will entertain the fans on the outskirts of the country's capital Nairobi. Six stages follow on Friday, totalling 127.58 kilometres. Saturday features the longest leg of the rally with another six tests covering 160.96 kilometres. On Sunday, six stages remain. The podium ceremony awaits after the iconic "Hell's Gate" stage at around 3h15 pm local time.

Did you know, that...

... Škoda factory crew Armin Schwarz/Manfred Hiemer (DEU/DEU) finished 2001 Safari Rally Kenya in third position overall – the best WRC result ever for the Škoda Octavia WRC?

... the event under the name of East African Safari Rally was one of the founding members of the World Rally Championship back in 1973? After initially being part of the calendar until 2002, the "Safari" returned in 2021 after a 19-year break.

... due to the rainy season hitting Kenya around Easter time, the stages in some years became so challenging, that less than ten cars finished the rally? There is one unwritten rule for the competitors: Expect the unexpected!

Standings WRC2 (after two events)

- 1 Yohan Rossel (FRA), Citroën, 25 points
- 2 Oliver Solberg (SWE), Škoda, 25 points**
- 3 Sami Pajari (FIN), Toyota, 18 points
- 4 Pepe López (ESP), Škoda, 18 points**

Standings WRC2 Challenger (after two events)

- 1 Pepe López (ESP), Škoda, 25 points**
- 2 Sami Pajari (FIN), Toyota, 25 points
- 3 Georg Linnamäe (EST), Toyota, 18 points

2024 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	24-28 January
Rally Sweden	15-18 February
Safari Rally Kenya	28-31 March
Croatia Rally	18-21 April
Rally de Portugal	9-12 May
Rally Italia Sardegna	30 May-2 June
Rally Poland	27-30 June
Rally Latvia	18-21 July
Rally Finland	1-4 August
Acropolis Rally Greece	5-8 September
Rally Chile	26-29 September
Central European Rally (CZE/AUT/DEU)	17-20 October
Rally Japan	21-24 November

Further information:

Anežka Boudná
Communications Motorsport
P +420 734 298 801
anezka.boudna@skoda-auto.cz
<http://skoda-motorsport.com>

Škoda Motorsport:



Facebook



YouTube



X

Media images:



Škoda crews at the Safari Rally Kenya

In 2023, Oliver Solberg/Elliot Edmondson (Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo) finished the only African round of the championship second in the RC2 class.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at the Safari Rally Kenya

Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 driver Oliver Solberg, 22-year old son of former FIA World Rally Champion Petter Solberg, tackles the Safari Rally Kenya already for the fourth time.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at the Safari Rally Kenya

Kajetan Kajetanowicz and co-driver Maciej Szczepaniak (Škoda Fabia Rally2 evo) won WRC2 at the Safari Rally Kenya in 2022 and 2023.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at the Safari Rally Kenya
Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 driver Kajetan Kajetanowicz from Poland is the defending WRC2 Challenger champion.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at the Safari Rally Kenya
Again driving a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 for team Toksport WRT, last year's WRC2 vice-champion Gus Greensmith starts his 2024 title bid in Kenya.

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) and Emil Lindholm (FIN) became WRC2 Champions in 2021 and 2022. Mikkelsen became WRC2 Champion again in 2023 with team Toksport WRT, when the all-new Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 entered the scene. The Škoda Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT also won the WRC2 Teams' title four times in a row from 2020 to 2023.
- › 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.
- › effectively leverages existing potential in important growth markets such as India, North Africa, Vietnam and the ASEAN region.
- › currently offers its customers eleven passenger-car series: the Fabia, Scala, Octavia and Superb as well as the Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Enyaq, Enyaq Coupé, Slavia and Kushaq.
- › delivered over 866,000 vehicles to customers around the world in 2023.
- › 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.
- › is part of the Brand Group CORE – the organisational merger of the Volkswagen Group's volume brands – to achieve joint growth and to significantly increase the overall efficiency of the five volume brands
- › independently manufactures and develops components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions as part of the Volkswagen Group; these components are also used in vehicles of other Group brands.
- › operates at three sites in the Czech Republic; has additional production capacity in China, Slovakia and India primarily through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine with a local partner.
- › employs over 40,000 people globally and is active in around 100 markets.