

Rally del Paraguay: Six Škoda Fabia among WRC2 top 10 after eventful world championship debut

- › **Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov finish the FIA World Rally Championship's newest addition third in WRC2 as highest-placed Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew.**
- › **Local hero Fabrizio Zaldivar and Italian co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian lead a group of five more Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews to finish inside the WRC2 top 10.**
- › **WRC2 Challenger podium features three Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews with Nikolay Gryazin and navigator Konstantin Aleksandrov as winners.**

Encarnación (PRY), 1 September 2025 – During Rally del Paraguay, the lead in WRC2 changed five times. After the 19 stages of the new FIA World Rally Championship event, Nikolay Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov were the only Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew to climb onto the WRC2 podium. They also won the WRC2 Challenger classification.

Swedish-British pairing Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson and Paraguayan-Spanish duo Diego Domínguez/Rogelio Peñate both lead WRC2 on Friday, until they experienced problems. Yohan Rossel/Arnaud Dunand from France seized the opportunity and finished the first leg as category leaders. Toksport WRT's Nikolay Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov followed in second, only 9.1 seconds behind.

As soon as the Saturday leg started, the Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew conquered the WRC2 lead. But only for four stages. "In one corner, something was sticking out. I couldn't avoid it and the front left tyre immediately lost all the air. We had to stop and change it," reported Nikolay Gryazin after losing 1:43.5 minutes in SS14. Bad luck for one side of the Toksport WRT camp, good fortune for the other: Following their teammates' trouble, Robert Virves and co-driver Jakko Viilo returned to Encarnación as the overnight leaders on Saturday.

The final leg on Sunday was affected by intermittent rain showers, making road conditions even more difficult. Right after the restart, it was Robert Virves' turn to experience two mishaps. "In one slippery place, we hit a bank and did a 180-degree spin on two wheels into a ditch. Luckily, we got out," said the Estonian, describing the moment when they lost the WRC2 lead to Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson. Two stages later, a puncture compounded the misery for Robert Virves and Jakko Viilo. With the necessary tyre change, the Estonian pairing lost another two minutes. The WRC2 winners of Rally Estonia eventually finished Rally del Paraguay fifth in WRC2. "We came to this rally to finish and gain experience. The pace has been reasonable and we have ideas where to improve," Robert Virves took it philosophically. The 25-year-old was out of the WRC2 title fight already before the start.

Nikolay Gryazin, on the other hand, had come to Paraguay to boost his title chances. After the early delay, he eventually recovered to third position in the WRC2 standings. With the 15 championship points from Paraguay, Gryazin climbs to 13th position overall. However, he can still score points in four more events, whereas the leading duo, Oliver Solberg and Yohan Rossel, only have one opportunity left.

Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews took the top four positions in the WRC2 Challenger classification: Victory went to Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov. Fabrizio Zaldivar/Marcelo Der Ohannesian and Robert Virves/Jakko Viilo joined them on the podium. Additionally, Miguel Zaldivar Senior/Rubén García won the WRC Masters Cup classification.

Fabrizio Zaldivar took the honours of finishing as highest-placed local driver. Sharing a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 with Italian co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian, the 24-year-old Paraguayan finished tenth in the overall standings and fourth in WRC2. „Not bad, but we expected more,“, Fabrizio Zaldivar admitted. „But overall I'm happy.“

He was followed home in the WRC2 classification by his compatriots Augusto Bestard/Borja Rozada in sixth, Franco Pappalardo/Juan Pablo Carrera in eighth and his father Miguel Zaldivar Senior and co-driver Rubén García in ninth. In total, six Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews finished inside the WRC2 top 10.

Before Rally del Paraguay, Gus Greensmith was the highest-placed Škoda driver in the WRC2 overall standings. However, he finished the event outside the points-scoring positions. The Englishman and Swedish co-driver, Jonas Andersson, had to retire on Friday when a heavy landing after one of the rally's many jumps damaged the suspension. After restarting on Saturday, they eventually finished in 15th position. As a consequence, Greensmith fell back behind Robert Virves in the WRC2 overall standings. „Despite the bad result, I loved every second. Now, Rally Chile is championship critical, but I like that,“ Greensmith looked ahead to the next WRC event.

In less than two weeks the WRC2 teams start their engines again. Rally Chile from 11 to 14 September 2025 is the next round of the FIA World Rally Championship.

Number of the Rally: 2

Two Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 lead Rally del Paraguay in WRC2, both entered by team Toksport WRT. From SS10 to SS13 Nikolay Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov held the top spot. Robert Virves/Jakko Viilo were listed as leaders after stages 14 and 15.

Rally del Paraguay (PRY), 28 – 31 August 2025, Result WRC2

- 1 Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson (SWE/GBR), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, 3:07:00.4 hours
- 2 Yohan Rossel/Arnaud Dunand (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 Rally2, +22.5 seconds
- 3 Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov (BUL/KGZ), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +1:54.4 minutes**
- 4 Fabrizio Zaldivar/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (PRY/ITA), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +2:23.2 minutes**
- 5 Robert Virves/Jakko Viilo (EST/EST), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +2:32.2 minutes**
- 6 Augusto Bestard/Borja Rozada (PRY/ESP), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +6:33.2 minutes**

Standings WRC2/Drivers (after 10 of 14 rallies)

- 1 Oliver Solberg (SWE), Toyota, 110 points
- 2 Yohan Rossel (FRA), Citroën, 99 points
- 3 Roope Korhonen (FIN), Toyota, 69 points
- 4 Robert Virves (EST), Škoda, 60 points**
- 5 Gus Greensmith (GBR), Škoda, 57 points**

Standings WRC2/Teams (after 10 of 14 rallies)

- 1 PH Sport, Citroën, 178 points
- 2 Toksport WRT, Škoda, 173 points**
- 3 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT NG, Toyota, 89 points
- 4 Sarrazin Motorsport-Iron Lynx, Citroën, 64 points

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Škoda crews at Rally del Paraguay

Nikolay Gryazin and co-driver Konstantin Aleksandrov (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Toksport) lead WRC2 for a couple of stages, but eventually had to settle for third place.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally del Paraguay

Fabrizio Zaldivar from Paraguay and Italian co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) finished fourth in WRC2. Tenth position overall qualified Fabrizio Zaldivar as highest-placed local driver.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally del Paraguay

Robert Virves, who shares a Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team Toksport WRT with Jakko Viilo, lead WRC2 at the end of the Saturday leg. Eventually, the Estonians finished fifth of the category.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally del Paraguay

Locals Augusto Bestard and co-driver Borja Rozada perfectly used their knowledge of the Paraguayan roads to reach the finish sixth in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally del Paraguay

Englishman Gus Greensmith and Swedish co-driver Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) lost all chances for a top position after retiring on Friday.

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. 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. In 2024, the WRC2 title fight was not decided until the season finale. Škoda driver Oliver Solberg of team Toksport WRT finished second overall.
- › 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 twelve passenger-car series: the Fabia, Scala, Octavia and Superb as well as the Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq.
- › delivered over 926,000 vehicles to customers around the world in 2024.
- › 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 approximately 40,000 people globally and is active in around 100 markets.