

Rally Sweden: Nordic Škoda drivers push for top results in the chase for WRC2 points

- › Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews from Finland and Sweden are among the favourites for WRC2 victory at the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › Finns Mikko Heikkilä and Lauri Joona, as well as local hero Isak Reiersen, are set to reprise their top results in the WRC2 category from last year's Rally Sweden
- › With 14 private Škoda crews on the entry list, the Czech brand is again the most popular among the WRC2 competitors

Mladá Boleslav, 11 February 2026 – With Rally Sweden (12-15 February 2026), the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) enters winter wonderland. 14 competitors with Škoda Fabia RS Rally 2 are entered into the WRC2 category. Among the candidates for the WRC2 victory are Mikko Heikkilä/Kristian Temonen and Lauri Joona/Antti Linnaketo, both from Finland, and Swedish pairing Isak Reiersen/Stefan Gustavsson.

Based in Umeå in the far north of the country, Rally Sweden features ultra-fast forest roads that are completely covered in snow and ice. Consequently, a special type of tyre is mandatory for only the second round of the 2026 WRC season: Each tyre is equipped with 384 tungsten-made studs. Per regulation, the studs may not exceed 20 millimetres in length.

Škoda crews have built up an impressive track record at Rally Sweden in recent years: They won the WRC2 category in 2022, in 2023 and again in 2024. This time around, Škoda drivers from the Nordic countries are aiming to continue this successful streak. Mikko Heikkilä from Finland finished third in WRC2 last year and is aiming for another top result. "I can't wait to tackle these fabulous, fast stages. My Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 is perfectly suited to these conditions," says the 34-year-old. Together with co-driver Kristian Temonen, he prepared for the only true winter event in the WRC calendar by competing the Finnish Championship round Arctic Lapland Rally in January. The crew of Škoda Motorsport customer team TGS Worldwide reached fifth position overall.

Lauri Joona, another Finnish driver now at the wheel of a TGS Worldwide run Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, celebrated fourth position in WRC2 at last year's Rally Sweden. He and co-driver Antti Linnaketo not only competed Arctic Lapland Rally as well but also used the Finnish Championship round SM Ralli Mikkeli as preparation. A fourth and second position overall respectively, raised Lauri Joona's hopes of gaining more WRC2 points at Rally Sweden. Isak Reiersen will be carrying the Swedish flag on his Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 operated by team JC Racetechnik. Together with co-driver, Stefan Gustavsson, he is aiming to beat the Finnish competition on home soil.

But not only Nordic rally aces are facing the unique challenge of a full-snow rally: Mattéo Chatillon/Maxence Cornuau bring their Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 from France, brand colleagues Giovanni Trentin/Pietro Elia Ometto are travelling from Italy to Umeå. The Škoda drivers with the longest journey are arguably Alejandro Mauro and Miguel Granados from Mexico, as well as Brazilian Cristian Baumgart. In total, the entry list features 14 Škoda crews. However, Italian Roberto Daprà and Frenchman Eric Camilli, who scored WRC2 points during the season-opening Rallye Monte-Carlo, will not be competing in Sweden.

At Rally Sweden, Škoda Motorsport's white and green service truck will once again be an important part of the service park. Teams running Škoda vehicles can purchase spare parts and receive support from Škoda Motorsport technicians there. This service is offered by Škoda Motorsport at selected European rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship and the FIA European Rally Championship.

Rally Sweden kicks off on Thursday evening (12 February) with a 10.23 kilometres long stage finishing at the famous Red Barn Arena close to the city of Umeå. On Friday, the teams must master seven special stages covering 124.88 kilometres. On Saturday, again seven stages with a total of 104.42 kilometres follow. Three stages over 61.13 kilometres close the event on Sunday. In total, the competitive distance will be 300.66 kilometres.

Did you know, that...

...Rally Sweden only became a winter rally in 1965?

...It was held for the first time in 1950, but in mid-summer under the name of "Rally to the Midnight Sun"?

...every crew must have a shovel on board to be able to dig their car out of the snow in case of an off?

...Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross won their class in 1993 with a Škoda Favorit 136L?

Standings WRC2/Drivers (after 1 of 14 events)

- 1 Léo Rossel (FRA), Citroën, 25 points
- 2 Roberto Daprà (ITA), Škoda, 17 points**
- 3 Arthur Pelamourgues (FRA), Hyundai, 15 points
- 4 Eric Camilli (FRA), Škoda, 12 points**
- 5 Chris Ingram (GBR), Toyota, 10 points

2026 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	22-25 January
Rally Sweden	12-15 February
Safari Rally Kenya	12-15 March
Croatia Rally	9-12 April
Rally Islas Canarias (ESP)	23-26 April
Rally de Portugal	7-10 May
Rally Japan	28-31 May
Acropolis Rally Greece	25-28 June
Rally Estonia	16-19 July
Rally Finland	30 July-2 August
Rally del Paraguay	27-30 August
Rally Chile Bío Bío	10-13 September
Rally Italia Sardegna	1-4 October
Rally Saudi Arabia	11-14 November

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Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Mikko Heikkilä and co-driver Kristian Temonen (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team TGS Worldwide) are aiming for the WRC2 podium.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Rally Sweden is the only pure winter event on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar (pictured: Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 driver Lauri Joona).

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Isak Reiersen and co-driver Stefan Gustavsson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team JC Racetechnik) fly the Swedish flag on their home event.

Source: Škoda Auto

Škoda Motorsport

- › Škoda celebrates 125 years of Motorsport since the first efforts in 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 three times in 2020, 2022 and 2023. In 2025 Toksport WRT took another WRC2 Teams' title and Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov of Toksport WRT became WRC2 Challenger drivers' and co-drivers' champions respectively.
- › 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;
- › aims to become one of the top three best-selling brands in Europe by the end of the decade by offering its customers the best of both worlds through a range of attractive BEV, hybrid & ICE products;
- › effectively exploits the potential in important growth markets such as India, Vietnam and the ASEAN region;
- › currently offers customers 12 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
- › delivered more than 1,040,000 vehicles to customers worldwide in 2025;
- › has been part of the Volkswagen Group, one of the world's most successful car manufacturers, for more than 30 years;
- › is part of Brand Group CORE, an organisational merger of the Volkswagen Group's volume brands, with the aim of achieving joint growth and significantly increasing the overall efficiency of all five volume brands;
- › independently develops and produces components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions for other Volkswagen Group brands;
- › operates three production plants in the Czech Republic; has production capacities in China, Slovakia and India, mostly through group partnerships, as well as in Vietnam and Ukraine in cooperation with a local partner;
- › employs around 40,000 people worldwide and is active in almost 100 markets.