

Rally Sweden: WRC2 podium position for Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew from Finland

- › Lauri Joona and co-driver Antti Linnaketo of Škoda Motorsport customer team TGS Worldwide finish the second round of FIA World Rally Championship third in WRC2.
- › Four Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews score WRC2 championship points.
- › Škoda Motorsport mourns the loss of long-time team manager Pavel Horteck.

Umeå (SWE), 15 February 2026 – Three pairings from neighbouring Finland climbed onto the WRC2 podium after Rally Sweden. Third place went to Lauri Joona and co-driver Antti Linnaketo, who shared a Škoda Fabia RS Rally 2 of team TGS Worldwide. In fifth position, Isak Reiersen/Stefan Gustavsson of team JC Racetechnik took the honours of highest placed local crew in WRC2.

As expected, Umeå greeted the FIA World Rally Championship teams with thick snow on the stages, temperatures way below zero and glorious sunshine during the days. By the time, the ice flakes had settled over the traditional Thursday evening super special stage “Red Barn Arena”, two Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crews from Finland were leading WRC2. Lauri Joona and co-driver Antti Linnaketo had the upper-hand over their TGS Worldwide team mates Mikko Heikkilä/Kristian Temonen.

Unfortunately, their dominance didn't continue on Friday morning. Mikko Heikkilä and Kristian Temonen's hopes of a strong result were destroyed when they got stuck in a snowbank for roughly 17 minutes. Admitting in jest that he was driving “like his grandmother”, Lauri Joona couldn't really keep up with the pace of the eventual winners Roope Korhonen/Anssi Viinikka or the runners-up Teemu Suninen/Janni Hussi. Nevertheless, finishing third equalled Lauri Joona's best WRC2 result and his first category podium since 2024.

Strangely enough, Rally Sweden hasn't been a happy hunting ground for local crews for a long time. The 2026 edition was no exception. Isak Reiersen and co-driver Stefan Gustavsson delivered a solid performance. This mistake-free approach saw the JC Racetechnik Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 climb from seventh position in the WRC2 standings after the first leg to fifth place at the finish.

The “never give up” attitude paid dividends for 19-year-old Giovanni Trentin and experienced co-driver Pietro Elia Ometto. The Italians put their Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 onto its roof during the first stage on Thursday evening. Luckily, the Delta Rally Team run car sustained only minor damage. After repairs, the reigning Italian Gravel Champions were back in action on Friday. They eventually climbed from 25th to eighth position in WRC2.

After leaving Rallye Monte-Carlo without any WRC2 points, Mattéo Chatillon and co-driver Maxence Cornuau ran as high as sixth in WRC2 during their Rally Sweden debut. However, a 15-minute delay on Sunday saw the French Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 crew drop to tenth position in the WRC2 standings.

From winter wonderland in northern Sweden with snow and ice under the tyres, the FIA World Rally Championship moves on to the heat and rough gravel stages of Eastern Africa. Safari Rally Kenya is next from 12th to 15th March.

Škoda Motorsport mourns the loss of Pavel Horek

Long-time Škoda Motorsport Team Manager Pavel Horek has passed away at the age of 76. The former co-driver joined Škoda Motorsport in 2001. He became the cornerstone of the Czech brand's rallying program since then. In his roles as team manager and sports director, he played a key part in achieving some of the greatest successes in Škoda Motorsport's 125-year history. He oversaw the development of highly successful rally cars, with the Škoda Fabia Rally2 setting the benchmark in its class for the past decade.

Number of the rally: 119.6

Despite all the stages being completely covered in snow and ice, Rally Sweden traditionally is one of the fastest events on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar. This year, SS2 "Bygdsiljum" was the quickest of them all. TGS Worldwide's Lauri Joona and co-driver Antti Linnaketo flew their Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 through the 27.55 kilometres long test at an average speed of 119.6 kph.

Rally Sweden (SWE), 12-15 February 2026,

2nd round of the FIA World Rally Championship, Result WRC2

1 Roope Korhonen/Anssi Viinikka (FIN/FIN), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, 2:46:29.3 hours

2 Teemu Suninen/Janni Hussi (FIN/FIN), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, +10.2 seconds

3 Lauri Joona/Antti Linnaketo (FIN/FIN), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +58.4 seconds

4 Taylor Gill/Daniel Brkic (AUS/AUS), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, +2:34.2 minutes

5 Isak Reiersen/Stefan Gustavsson (SWE/SWE), Škoda Fabia RS Rally2, +2:56.9 minutes

6 Michał Sołowow/Maciej Baran (POL/POL), Toyota GR Yaris Rally2, +8:54.8 minutes

Standings WRC2/Drivers (after 2 of 14 events)

1 Roope Korhonen (FIN), Toyota, 25 points

2 Léo Rossel (FRA), Citroën, 25 points

3 Roberto Dapprà (ITA), Škoda, 17 points

4 Teemu Suninen (FIN), Toyota, 17 points

5 Lauri Joona (FIN), Škoda, 15 points

6 Arthur Pelamourgues (FRA), Hyundai, 15 points

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Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Lauri Joona and co-driver Antti Linnaketo (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team TGS Worldwide) secured the third WRC2 podium position.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

29-year-old Finn Lauri Joona kicked off his WRC2 campaign with third position at the wheel of TGS Worldwide's Škoda Fabia RS Rally2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Local crew Isak Reiersen/Stefan Gustavsson (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 of team JC Racetechnik) finished fifth in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

Sparks fly when the studs of Delta Rally Team's Škoda Fabia RS Rally2 bite into the ice. Italians Giovanni Trentin/Pietro Elia Ometto came home eighth in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Škoda crews at Rally Sweden

After a delay on Sunday morning, Mattéo Chatillon/Maxence Cornuau (Škoda Fabia RS Rally2) dropped from sixth to tenth position in WRC2.

Source: Škoda Auto



Source: Škoda Auto

Pavel Horek (1949-2026)

Long-time Škoda Motorsport Team Manager Pavel Horek passed away at the age of 76.

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.