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ACI Rally Monza: ŠKODA ends 2020 world championship season with WRC3 double victory

- › Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) win WRC3 and come home sixth overall at FIA World Rally Championship finale in Italy
- › ŠKODA Motorsport supported Oliver Solberg from Sweden and co-driver Aaron Johnston from Ireland round up European title winning season with second position in WRC3
- › Both driving ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Pontus Tidemand/Patrik Barth (SWE/SWE) and Jan Kopecký/Jan Hloušek (CZE/CZE) finish second and third respectively in WRC2
- › ŠKODA Motorsport Team Manager Pavel Horteck: “Congratulations to Andreas and Oliver for handing ŠKODA a 1-2 result in WRC3. Also hats off to all private ŠKODA teams for delivering a great performance in such difficult conditions.”

Monza, 6 December 2020 – Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (NOR/NOR) score a convincing WRC3 victory at ACI Rally Monza (3-6 December 2020), finale of the FIA World Rally Championship. Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, the Norwegians win the category ahead of ŠKODA Motorsport supported Oliver Solberg (SWE) and co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL). Pontus Tidemand (SWE) misses his second WRC2 title after 2017 with the smallest margin. Together with co-driver Patrik Barth (SWE), he finishes second in the category and consequently in the championship. Despite experiencing the most difficult road conditions during his rally debut, former DTM factory driver and GT racing ace Maro Engel (GER) brings home his ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo unscathed.

At the iconic Autodromo Nazionale di Monza, the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship ended in style. ACI Rally Monza, brought into the calendar on short notice, turned out as most dramatic. Already on Friday's first leg, completely run inside the boundaries of the famous Italian F1 race track, the teams had to fight heavy rain and extremely slippery conditions. Only Andreas Mikkelsen from Norway, driving an Eurosol Racing Team Hungary prepared ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, seemed unimpressed. In WRC3, the former factory driver was a class of his own, building up a lead of nearly one minute until day's end. Finnish ŠKODA privateers Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen held second from ŠKODA Motorsport supported Oliver Solberg (SWE), who lost some time after stalling the engine. ŠKODA also was the leading car in WRC2 with Pontus Tidemand targeting his second WRC2 title after 2017. Competing in their first WRC rally of 2020, Jan Kopecký (CZE) and co-driver Jan Hloušek (CZE) in the second Toksport WRT Team run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo struggled to get up to speed in these challenging conditions and settled for category fourth.

The second leg saw the teams tackle small and winding roads high up in the nearby mountains. While the stages were only partly snow covered in the morning, the afternoon saw a proper winter storm hitting Lombardy. Two stages even had to be cancelled for safety reasons. In WRC3, Oliver Solberg overtook Emil Lindholm and launched an impressive attack on Andreas Mikkelsen, who was not happy with his tyre choice and also had a technical issue. When the rally came back to Monza, Mikkelsen's lead over Solberg was down to 14.3 seconds. In WRC2, Pontus Tidemand gambled with the tyre choice for his ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. While he fell back to category fourth in the morning, he took revenge in the afternoon and immediately made up lost ground. Unfortunately, the cancellation of 37 stages kilometres meant he only could fight back to second in WRC2.

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Sunday with another three stages inside the Royal Park of Monza brought no changes to the WRC2 and WRC3 classifications. With two more stage wins during the final leg Andreas Mikkelsen secured WRC3 victory. Oliver Solberg had to settle for second. „It's been one of the most difficult rallies of my life. But I'm really happy with the performance and the experience I gained," said the 19 years old reigning ERC1 Junior title winner of the FIA European Rally Championship. Mikkelsen even achieved sixth position in the overall classification, followed by Solberg in seventh. Second WRC2 place for Pontus Tidemand made him miss out on the category title. "We did what we could, but this time it wasn't enough," Tidemand concluded.

The season finale also saw strong performances from other ŠKODA private teams. Jan Kopecký/Jan Hloušek finished third in WRC2. Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen ended up fourth in WRC3 with Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak coming home two places further down. Although the extreme road conditions were anything than ideal for his first rally ever, former DTM factory driver Maro Engel brought the Toksport WRT Team run ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to the finish in one piece. The German came to Monza fresh from third overall in 2020 ADAC GT Masters, also racing for Toksport. "It's been my dream to drive a rally since a long time. When the ACI Rally Monza was added to the calendar, the decision was easy," Engel said. Guided by experienced Austrian co-driver Ilka Minor, he finished in 13th position amongst 52 competitors in RC2 class.

"Congratulations to Andreas Mikkelsen and Oliver Solberg for handing ŠKODA a 1-2 result in WRC3. Pontus Tidemand was very unlucky, that the cancellation of stages compromised his fight for WRC2 title," ŠKODA Motorsport Team Manager Pavel Horteck said. "Also hats off to all private ŠKODA teams for delivering a great performance in such difficult conditions."

Result Rally Monza (WRC3)

1. Mikkelsen/Jæger (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, 2:19:47.2 hrs.
2. Solberg/Johnston (SWE/IRL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, + 15.9 sec.
3. Huttunen/Lukka (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20 Rally2, + 1:19.2 min.
4. Lindholm/Korhonen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, + 1:57.8 min.
5. Kajetanowicz/Szczepaniak (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, + 3:38.3 min.
6. Bulacia Wilkinson/Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG), Citroën C3 Rally2, + 4:51.6 min.

Result ACI Rally Monza (WRC2)

1. Østberg/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), Citroën C3 Rally2, + 2:21:18.4 hrs.
2. Tidemand/Barth (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, + 25.6 sec.
3. Kopecký/Hloušek (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, + 1:23.3 min.
4. Fourmaux/Jamoul (FRA/BEL), Ford Fiesta Rally2, + 29:20.4 min.

Number of the day: 7

Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Anders Jæger, sharing a Eurosol Racing Team Hungary prepared ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, score seven WRC3 victories on the 14 properly run stages.

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The calendar of the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	23/01–26/01/2020
Sweden	13/02–16/02/2020
Mexico	12/03–15/03/2020
Estonia	04/09–06/09/2020
Turkey	18/09–20/09/2020
Italia Sardegna	08/10–11/10/2020
Monza/Italy	03/12–06/12/2020

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ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

Video of the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo at the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship finale. Of the 31 ŠKODA crews at the start, Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (NOR/NOR) win WRC3 and finish 6th overall

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of Eurosol Racing Team Hungary, Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger win WRC3

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

ŠKODA Motorsport supported Oliver Solberg (SWE) and co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL) bring their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo home in second position in WRC3

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ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

ŠKODA crews on the WRC3 podium (from left): winners Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) and Anders Jæger (NOR), second placed Oliver Solberg (SWE) and Aaron Johnston (IRL)

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

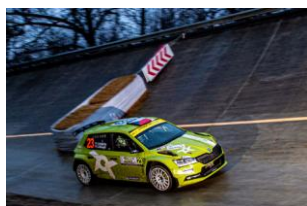


ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

Onboard a Toksport WRT Team entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Pontus Tidemand/Patrik Barth (SWE/SWE) finish second in WRC2

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

Czech record rally champion Jan Kopecký and co-driver Jan Hloušek (CZE) end their world championship comeback third in WRC2 in a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of Toksport WRT Team

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at ACI Rally Monza

Former DTM factory driver and GT racing ace Maro Engel (GER), co-driven by Ilka Minor (AUT) onboard a Toksport WRT Team prepared ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, finished his first rally ever on P13 in RC2 class

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

2019 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport so far. Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC 2 Pro drivers' and co-drivers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019 as well as substantially supporting ŠKODA Motorsport to win the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' title. Also in 2019, ŠKODA customer teams conquered five FIA championships and took additional 23 national titles around the world.

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, Chris Ingram/Ross Whittock (GBR/GBR) won FIA European Rally Championship (ERC). Filip Mareš/Jan Hloušek (CZE/CZE) took the FIA European Rally Championship/ERC1 Junior title. Manvir Singh Baryan/Drew Sturrock (KEN/GBR) powered a ŠKODA FABIA R5 to the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC), while

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Ricardo Triviño/Marc Martí (MEX/ESP) won the FIA North American and Central American Rally Championship (NACAM).

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, a high-tech 4x4, was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2019 and is successfully continuing the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport.
In total, both generations of the Czech rally car have been sold more than 320 times worldwide.

ŠKODA has been successful on the motorsport scene since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include winning the title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for the first time in 2016, numerous title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Monte Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

ŠKODA AUTO

- › is this year celebrating 125 years since the company was founded during the pioneering era of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established car manufacturers in the world.
- › currently offers its customers ten passenger-car series: the CITIGO® iV, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ and ENYAQ iV.
- › delivered 1.24 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2019.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs approximately 42,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.