

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Arctic Rally Finland: ŠKODA Motorsport supported Andreas Mikkelsen advances to second in WRC2

- › Norwegian crew of Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) on course to extend lead in WRC2 overall standings
- › Team mates Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR) in category fourth strengthen position of reigning WRC2 Team Champion Toksport WRT
- › ŠKODA customer crew Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen (FIN/FIN) defends lead in WRC3 category reserved for pure private crews
- › Two stages left for second round of FIA World Rally Championship 2021

Rovaniemi (FIN), 27 February 2021 – One step forward for Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene. The Norwegian ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew climbed from WRC2 third to second during the Saturday leg of Arctic Rally Finland (26 – 28 February 2021). After the category victory at the season opening Rallye Monte-Carlo, Mikkelsen and team Toksport WRT are on course to extend their respective overall leads. Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR) in Toksport WRT's second ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo still hold category fourth. Meanwhile, the lead in category WRC3, which is reserved for pure private crews, changed from one ŠKODA customer crew to another. Finns Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen go into the last leg on Sunday as first in WRC3, while Friday's leaders Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) lost a duel with a snow bank.

Another perfect winter day at Arctic Rally Finland, second round of the 2021 FIA World Rally Championship. Crews enjoyed brilliant sunshine and temperatures around zero centigrade during Saturday's six stages. During the opening leg on Friday, WRC2 championship leader Andreas Mikkelsen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) suffered being first of the category on the road. Third in WRC2 was the most he could achieve under the circumstances. "Rally2 cars have less track width than the Rally1 cars, which start every stage first," Mikkelsen explained. "So the WRC2 leader always has to clean the specific line, which clearly is a disadvantage."

For Saturday, category leaders Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) had to take over this unpopular job. Beginning the second leg third in the WRC2 starting order, Mikkelsen soon overtook overnight WRC2 second Nikolay Gryazin. But Lappi, in 2016 WRC2 champion for ŠKODA Motorsport, was clearly out of reach. "I pushed as hard as I could. But to be honest, I couldn't match Esapekka's speed," Mikkelsen admitted. "The goal for Sunday is, to score maximum points in the power stage." The Norwegian finished the day second, albeit the difference to Lappi over the day increased to 49.8 seconds.

During the morning loop, Toksport WRT team mates Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR) were locked in a battle with Adrien Formaux/Renaud Jamoul. When the French duo got stuck in a snow bank, the Norwegian ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew finally secured fourth in the category. "It's really difficult to keep the tyres in good shape," Brynildsen summed up the day. "We had a spin in the morning, in the afternoon it went a lot better."

ŠKODA crews continue their domination in WRC3, the category reserved for pure private crews. Though, overnight leaders Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) lost first



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place after a spin into a snow bank followed by a brief encounter with a tree. Fellow Finns Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) took over the top spot. Former FIA World Rallycross Champion and DTM Meister Mattias Ekström (SWE), driving his own ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, advanced to fifth position in WRC3. After the second leg, seven of the top 10 cars in WRC3 sport the ŠKODA logo.

The first ever WRC winter rally in Finland comes to a close on Sunday. Only two stages covering 44,94 kilometres are left. The winner of Arctic Rally Finland is expected on the podium around 1:30 pm local time.

## Standings Arctic Rally Finland after Leg 2 (WRC2)

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), VW Polo GTI Rally2, 1:48:20.9 hrs.
2. **Mikkelsen/Fløene (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +49.8 sec.**
3. Gryazin/Aleksandrov (RAF/RAF), VW Polo GTI Rally 2, +1:25.8 min.
4. **Brynielsen/ Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +2:31.5 min.**
5. Veiby/Andersson (NOR/SWE), Hyundai NG i20 Rally2, +2:53.7 min.
6. Prokop/Ernst (CZE/CZE), Ford Fiesta MkII Rally2, +6:03.7 min.

## Number of the day: 384

Ever wondered how a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo reaches speeds of more 200 kph on roads packed with ice and snow? One of the secrets are the special tyres. Each carries 384 tungsten-tipped studs. To put more load on every square inch of rubber, they are also not as wide as gravel and asphalt tyres. On world championship level, these special snow tyres are only used during Rally Sweden or its 2021 substitute Arctic Rally Finland respectively.

## 2021 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	21 – 24 January
<b>Arctic Rally Finland</b>	<b>26 – 28 February</b>
Rally Croatia	22 – 25 April
Vodafone Rally Portugal	20 – 23 May
Rally Italia Sardegna	3 – 6 June
Safari Rally Kenya	24 – 27 June
Rally Estonia	15 – 18 July
Rally Finland	29 July – 1 August
Renties Ypres Rally Belgium	13 – 15 August
COPEC Rally Chile	9 – 12 September
RallyRACC Rally de España	14 – 17 October
Rally Japan	11 –14 November

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### ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

ŠKODA Motorsport supported Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene (NOR/NOR) brought the Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in second WRC2 position to the finish of the Saturday leg

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

WRC2 overall standings leader Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) from Norway are on course to more big points during 2021 FIA World Rally Championship's second round

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

The relatively narrow snow tyres of the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo – pictured Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR) – carry 384 tungsten-tipped studs each, literally biting into the frozen surface

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Finnish ŠKODA customer crew Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) leads WRC3 category for pure privateers after the second leg

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## ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Former FIA World Rallycross Champion Mattias Ekström, sharing the Team EKS ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo with fellow Swede Emil Bergkvist, advanced to fifth in WRC3

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been successful in motorsports since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include victory in the European Touring Car Championship 1981 as well as multiple titles in the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC2 category. Over the years, ŠKODA customer teams also won numerous national championships as well as titles in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the der Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), 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 teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Rallye Monte-Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2009, the ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 took the rally scene by storm. The following seasons, the all-wheel-drive rally car with a 2.0 litres normally aspirated engine won 50 national and international titles worldwide. It then wrote the most successful chapter in ŠKODA's motorsport history – until its successor surpassed it. The ŠKODA FABIA R5, a production-based rally car with four-wheel drive and 1.6 litres turbo engine, was homologated in its original form by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. Further developed to ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo (homologated on 1 April 2019), the high-tech car successfully continues the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport. Due to changes in regulations, the car was re-named ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in 2020.

The success story of the ŠKODA FABIA R5 took off in 2016, when Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won the WRC2 drivers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship. The following year, Pontus Tidemand (SWE) won the WRC2 drivers' category, while ŠKODA Motorsport took the WRC2 manufacturers' title. In 2018, ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký was crowned WRC 2 drivers' champion. 2019 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC2 Pro drivers' and co-drivers' title as well as substantially supporting ŠKODA Motorsport to win the WRC2 Pro manufacturers' title. In 2020 ŠKODA customer team Toksport WRT became Team Champion of the WRC2 category.

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is focusing on three priorities with the "NEXT LEVEL ŠKODA" program for the future: expanding the model portfolio in the direction of entry-level segments, opening up new markets for further growth in the volume segment, and making concrete progress in sustainability and diversity.
- › currently offers its customers ten passenger-car series: the CITIGO<sup>®</sup> iV, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ and ENYAQ iV.
- › delivered more than one million vehicles to customers around the world in 2020.
- › is part of Volkswagen Group since 30 years. 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 with a local partner.
- › employs approximately 42,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.