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Arctic Rally Finland: ŠKODA Motorsport supported Andreas Mikkelsen finishes Friday leg third in WRC2

- › Steady run through first leg of 2021 FIA World Rally Championship's second round for ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo driver Mikkelsen and navigator Ola Fløene from Norway
- › Toksport WRT team mates Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR) reach finish of leg 1 on fourth spot in WRC2
- › Double lead for ŠKODA customer crews in WRC3 category reserved for pure private teams
- › Perfect winter conditions greet world championship competitors during the series first ever visit to the Rovaniemi based event

Rovaniemi (FIN), 26 February 2021 – Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene from Norway hold third position in WRC2 after leg 1 of Arctic Rally Finland (26 – 28 February 2021). Driving a Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, the WRC2 championship leaders trail former ŠKODA factory crew Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) on top of the category by 16.3 seconds. Fellow Norwegians Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan in Toksport WRT's second ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo finish the opening leg of Finland's first ever WRC winter rally fourth in WRC2. Category WRC3, which is reserved for pure private teams, lists Finnish ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen as interim leaders.

"Winter wonderland" doesn't exaggerate the conditions, the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship faces in Rovaniemi close to the Polar Circle. Arctic Rally Finland (26 – 28 February 2021) started under perfect winter weather with two runs over the 31.05 kilometres long test "Sariojärvi", the second one in the dark. Coming back to the evening service, WRC2 overall leader Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene were listed third in the category. The ŠKODA Motorsport supported Norwegians aboard the Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo collected a slim 16.3 seconds deficit to category leaders Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN), who won the WRC2 championship in 2016 for ŠKODA Motorsport.

Posting the third fastest time in SS1, Andreas Mikkelsen was not really happy. "The tyres were going off towards the end," he said. The Norwegian was referring to the 384 tungsten-tipped studs on each of his special snow tyres, which are only used during this event. "Otherwise we had no issues, a clear run." Toksport WRT team mate Eyvind Brynildsen was all smiles. "That's the best you can do with your clothes on," he joked after his first WRC kilometres since October last year.

ŠKODA crews dominate category WRC3, reserved for pure private crews. Local heroes Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) go as leaders into the second leg on Saturday, followed by fellow Finns Teemu Asunmaa/Marko Salminen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo). Former FIA World Rallycross Champion Mattias Ekström (SWE), driving his own ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, reached the finish of the Friday in seventh position in WRC3. Eight of the interim Top 10 in WRC3 trust in ŠKODA.

Arctic Rally Finland continues on Saturday with six stages covering 144.04 kilometres, making it by far the longest leg of the event. Temperatures are expected to stay around zero degrees, promising another day of perfect winter rallying.

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Standings Arctic Rally Finland after Leg 1 (WRC2)

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), VW Polo GTI Rally2, 33:18.9 Min.
2. Gryazin/Aleksandrov (RAF/RAF), VW Polo GTI Rally 2, +13.6 sec.
3. **Mikkelsen/Fløene (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +16.3 sec.**
4. **Brynildsen/ Gulbæk Engan (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, +42.2 sec.**
5. Fourmaux/Jamoul (FRA/BEL), Ford Fiesta Rally2, +46.3 sec.
6. Veiby/Andersson (NOR/SWE), Hyundai NG i20 Rally2, +1:35.8 min.

Number of the day: 37.5

21 ŠKODA customer crews started Arctic Rally Finland, making the Czech brand the most popular not only amongst the teams running Rally2 cars but also in general. Of the 56 cars allowed to start, exactly 37.5 per cent sport the ŠKODA logo.

2021 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	21 – 24 January
Arctic Rally Finland	26 – 28 February
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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Media images:



ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene (NOR/NOR) in the Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo hold third position in WRC2 after leg 1

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Perfect winter conditions greeted Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Fløene (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) during FIA World Rally Championship's first ever visit to Rovaniemi close to the Arctic Circle in Finland

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Norwegians Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Gulbæk Engan in the second Toksport WRT ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo finished the Friday leg fourth in WRC2

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Finnish ŠKODA customer crew Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) lead WRC3 category after the first leg

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Arctic Rally Finland

Former FIA World Rallycross Champion Mattias Ekström (SWE), navigated by Emil Bergkvist (SWE), in Ekström's own ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, are among the front runners 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



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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 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® 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.