

News release
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Solberg's second win puts pressure on his parents...

- Oliver makes it two wins from two starts in Latvia
- Seventeen-year-old Swede shows the World Rally Cars the way home
- Melting snow makes for tough conditions
- Petter and Pernilla under pressure for a Solberg 2019 hat-trick

Oliver Solberg's exceptional start to the new season continued with a second outright rally win in three weeks at Saturday's Rally Sarma in Latvia.

Seventeen-year-old Oliver stunned the rally world with a surefooted and inch-perfect four-wheel drive debut win at last month's Rally Alūksne. Back in his Oliver Solberg Motorsport-run Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 for Saturday's second round of the Latvian Rally Championship and the result was the same.

Oliver and co-driver Aaron Johnston completed the eight stages around Gulbene, north-east Latvia, almost a minute and a half faster than their nearest rival – a rival who was driving a more powerful and technologically advanced World Rally Car.

"It's a really nice feeling to win again," said Oliver after 100 kilometres of flat-out competition. "But this rally was definitely tougher than the first one. The conditions in Alūksne were really like full winter, but here there was less snow and a bit more gravel coming through.

"Honestly, at times today it was crazy. We had some really big ruts which were just full of water where the snow and ice melted – in these places we were aquaplaning so much. When you are flat out, this isn't such a nice feeling."

"We had a couple of small issues in the first loop of stages," said Oliver. "But once we got everything sorted in service [after SS3] we could really focus on the driving. The times were good, I'm very, very happy. We were fastest on the second-to-last stage, which was in the dark. But after that we were sensible in the last one, we had a good lead and the win was there waiting.

"The second win is a fantastic result for me and Aaron. It's great for the championship, but more importantly we are learning more and more with the car – this is what this part of the season is about. This is only my second event in a four-wheel drive car and I won. I like this four-wheel drive!"

Oliver is now reduced to the role of a frustrated spectator for his nation's round of the World Rally Championship, Rally Sweden.

"A lot of the guys I was competing against in Latvia are going on to Rally Sweden," he said. "It will be really interesting to see how they get on. Nikolay [Gryazin, Russian, 21] is one of the drivers I'll be watching in Sweden; we had a fun fight today and our times compared well.

Attention in the Solberg household now switches from Oliver to his mum and dad's fifth attempt at Rally Sweden Historic. Petter and Pernilla have won three from four so far in the Ford Escort RS1800 and will be chasing a return to the podium's top step after second place 12 months ago.

"The pressure is on them to keep up the winning momentum now," smiled Oliver. "It's going to be great to see how they get on. It'll be hard for them, in the Escort, going up against a lot of powerful four-wheel drive cars. It won't be easy, but for sure they have the talent to win!"

Petter said Oliver's result had given them the boost they needed.

"We have to go really hard now," said the three-time world champion. "Oliver is showing us how to win, so Pernilla and me, we need to respond – we can't let him down!

"Seriously though, what a result for Oliver and Aaron here, just fantastic. Some of those conditions were really horrible and so nasty with the deep water in the ruts. The aquaplaning is the nightmare for all the drivers, but Oliver was so calm and so professional – incredible for a 17-year-old in just his second time in the R5 car."

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