

News release
April 12, 2018

PSRX Volkswagen Sweden: it'll be 110 per cent all the way

- Pernilla: the start of a new chapter
- Petter ready for 50th WRX start
- Johan: the waiting is over
- Barcelona round one, good to go

What's coming?

The PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team is heading south from its Torsby home to round one of the FIA World Rallycross Championship at the Circuit de Catalunya, just north of Barcelona.

After 153 days away from competition, the most exciting motorsport championship on planet earth is back in action. And everybody's aiming at PSRX Volkswagen Sweden, it's brace of beautiful Polo R Supercars and drivers, team owner and two-time World RX winner Petter Solberg – who starts his 50th World RX race this week – and defending world champion Johan Kristoffersson.

Last year was the team's rookie season and the three-way partnership between Petter's PSRX squad, Volkswagen Sweden and Volkswagen Motorsport couldn't have worked better. It was the dream start, with both titles taken with two rounds to spare and victory in eight of the 12 races.

Now it's time for year two.

Tell us more Pernilla...

PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team principal Pernilla Solberg

"There's something about the first round of the season, there's so much anticipation, everybody's eager to see who's got what and how quick their rivals are going to be.

"We have seen from the two official tests we've done at Lohéac and Silverstone, our opposition hasn't been standing still through the winter! And it's not just our old rivals like [Mattias] Ekström, his Audi team or Sébastien [Loeb] and the factory Peugeots, we also saw speed from the new Fiestas from Olsberg MSE and the Renaults from Prodrive. We are also very curious to see [Marcus] Grönholm's Hyundai team. The competition is going to be so fierce this year! We all need to work very hard, the boys need to stay out of trouble and focus on the team strategy to defend our two FIA World RX titles. Now we're looking forward to an exciting season with fair and professional driving.

"Our fans will be happy to know that we have also been quite busy through the winter months. Petter and Johan have been flat-out getting themselves

prepared mentally and physically for what's coming and everybody at PSRX Volkswagen Sweden has given 100 per cent, actually, like we always say, 110 per cent to the coming year.

"For Petter and me, like everybody here, motorsport is our life and we are very lucky to be able to work with what we enjoy so much. Last year was incredible and we have some very nice trophies, but this is 2018 – a completely new challenge and chapter is waiting for us."

Petter, what's the key to winning at this track?

Petter Solberg, PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team owner/driver and triple FIA world champion

"It's the same like everywhere in World RX: you have to be neat, tidy and fast everywhere and every time. I've been in this championship for four years now and I've seen the margins getting smaller and smaller all the time – now if you make a small mistake in the start, it can really hurt you a lot in the weekend.

"From Q1 all the way forward, you have to be focused, prepared and ready to follow the plan we have made together.

"Catalunya is a good track for me, it's got some nice longer corners where you can bring a little bit more speed. This Volkswagen Polo R Supercar we have is an unbelievable car to drive, you know we are hitting 100kph in under two seconds; we are accelerating faster than a Formula 1 car and then we are going to gravel. Honestly, this sport is just fantastic – the thrill you have when you are sitting waiting to go is fantastic. I love it.

"When I won here in 2015, this was not the first round. We were nearly into the last part of the season and Barcelona was the first race I had won since Lydden [Hill, five rounds earlier]. I was so happy to win, so happy. The Spanish fans are some of the nicest, always cheering and giving you the big smile and a lot of energy and enthusiasm. That's what I can't wait to see when we get back there again. My target for my 50th World RX race is to give them a Petter Solberg win to celebrate!

"You know, it's been a hard winter for us to get here again, everybody has been working flat, flat-out. But this is what we have been working towards. My team is ready and I am ready."

Title defence starts here, Johan. Are you ready?

Johan Kristoffersson, defending FIA World Rallycross Champion

"Definitely ready. The winter really was too long for me. I did some rallying while I was away, driving a Skoda Fabia R5 in my home round of the World Rally Championship (Rally Sweden, finishing 17th overall and sixth in class).

"I was really happy with the way the event went. I set my first ever fastest time in the [WRC2] class on the first day, but probably more important to me

was the quickest time I managed in the superspecial stage. This is the stage which is most like rallycross, it's shorter than the ones in the forest and in a stadium.

"One of the reasons I did the rally is that I have seen how rallying really makes a driver ready all the time. Of course, when you're competing, you are always ready, but I saw with Petter when he went to the joker laps, he was always immediately there with the pace – I think this comes from rallying. So, hopefully, I come a little bit better prepared for the season having competed already in a world championship event.

"Last year was unbelievable for me, winning at home in Höljes was something else and then breaking some records was amazing, but I think this year will be tougher. Last year we were able to surprise some people, but now they're ready – and I think a few of the teams are even having some surprises for us!"

Driver data

Petter Solberg (NOR)

World RX starts: 49

World RX wins: 10

World RX titles: 2

Johan Kristoffersson (SWE)

World RX starts: 40

World RX wins: 9

World RX titles: 1

World RX of Catalunya-Barcelona data

Last year's winner: Mattias Ekstrom (SWE)

Fastest lap: Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) 42.791s

Circuit length: 1.133km

Asphalt/gravel: 60.4% – 39.6%

What? When?

Qualifying 1/2: Saturday April 14 1200/1500

Qualifying 3/4: Sunday April 15 0930/1000

Semi-finals/Final: Sunday April 15 1500

Media activation

Meet the team Friday April 13 1430-1530

Meet the team Saturday April 14 1800-1815

Meet the team Sunday April 15 1715-1730

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