

News release
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PSRX Volkswagen Sweden leads WRX after Belgian rough and tumble

- Both PSRX Volkswagen Sweden Polo R Supercars in the top five
- Petter takes back-to-back podiums in Belgium
- Johan's championship lead is what it was... nine points
- PSRX Volkswagen Sweden continues to lead teams' championship

Weekend's don't come much tougher than that...

PSRX Volkswagen Sweden still leads both FIA World Rallycross Championships after one of the most competitive – and feisty – rounds in the series' history.

For the third round in succession, changeable conditions left the track treacherous and put grip at a premium. Like in rounds one and two, the sun shone through Saturday, only for the clouds to gather on Sunday.

Petter led on Saturday night, but dropped back with troublesome qualifying on Sunday morning. Both PSRX Volkswagen Sweden cars ran in the first semi-final and that was when things really started to click aboard the pair of Polo R Supercars.

Johan and Petter finished one-two in a supreme semi, but the final didn't exactly follow.

For the first time this year, Johan didn't win. Launching off the damper side of the track, he struggled to contain a storming Sébastien Loeb and then found himself on two wheels at the apex of the first corner.

The organisers will be finding pieces of Supercar at that first corner for weeks to come; it was comfortably the season's most action-packed right-hander so far. Johan's Polo R Supercar was damaged in that first corner melee, forcing him into a defensive position. He finished a disappointed fifth, off the podium for just the second time in 14 races.

Petter, who lifted the Monster Energy Supercharger Award for the fastest reaction from the start, chased Loeb as hard as possible, but finished second to the Frenchman – happy to emerge from the final with points and a podium.

Driver	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	O/A	SF	F
Petter Solberg	1	3	11	8	5	2	2
Johan Kristoffersson	4	5	2	3	3	1	5

Petter Solberg (NOR) #11

What a race that final was! And what a weekend this has been... incredible.

I was happy to lead after Q2 and overnight, but Sunday morning really didn't go to plan. Things came together much better in the semi-final, but the conditions were so tricky for the final. The grip was so inconsistent across the track, you had to be really careful – but when you are in the fight, you just try to go like hell and then deal with it!

That first corner... what happened? I still have no idea. I had hits on both sides, at one point I just wanted to close my eyes and hope I came out of the other side! When we did come out of the corner, everything was OK. I thought: "OK, the car is good, let's go for it – I can win this!"

I really thought we had a good chance of the win, but I'm happy with second place and some good points after what's been a bit of a crazy weekend.

Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) #1

This has been a little bit the story of my season so far: a tough Saturday and an improving Sunday. Except this Sunday didn't improve as much as the last two!

A little bit of the problem for me in the final was the place I was sitting on the grid, it was a bit more wet than Loeb's side. But, hey, this is racing. The start wasn't so bad for me, but the next thing I knew I was on two wheels going into the first corner. Luckily we didn't roll, but when the car banged down there was some damage and I knew straight away it was going to be tough to fight for the win.

From then on for me, it was a case of managing the damage on the car and getting as many points as I could. I was really looking for a podium, but it wasn't going to happen and in the end I even dropped to fifth. This wasn't the ideal weekend, it's been a lot of really tough racing in some conditions which have been so, so tricky.

The good thing for me is that I still lead the championship and the gap behind me is the same as it was when we arrived – it's almost like this weekend didn't happen! So, now we look forward to going to race at Silverstone for the first time.

Pernilla Solberg (PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team principal)

Like the boys have said, this has been one a pretty tough weekend for the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team. But we have come through it in fantastic shape.

Talk about all-action, every race was so exciting. Having them in the same semi-final is always so much harder, but they qualified first and second and I was really happy for that! The final was so dramatic and so much happened

in that first difficult corner. I completely held my breath as the boys went into it – I think in English there is the saying to put the square peg in the round hole... that's what those six cars were doing there. It was crazy.

Unfortunately, Johan took some damage and that made it hard for him to fight, but Petter was right up there and able to split the Peugeots. We hoped he might be able to get the win, but overtaking – even in the dry – is really hard at this track.

Naturally, we are competitors and we want to win, but weekends like this are also so important to the team. These weekends when we score good, consistent points are, we know, the foundations of successful championships. That's why we can go away from here happy, the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden has done a fantastic job in Belgium and we go to Silverstone on a high.

Talking about Silverstone, we are all quite excited about Speed Machine. IMG has worked so hard to create and promote this top-notch event and we very much look forward to the food, the music and the chance this brings to introduce new fans and families to this incredible sport of ours, World RX. At the same time, we're really looking forward to the hardcore RX fans that we recognise from all the years before. Petter has very good memories from England – he won the last race at Lydden last year, so it would be very nice for PSRX Volkswagen Sweden to take the first win in the new venue!

Volkswagen R Performance fact of the weekend:

World RX of Belgium offers the shortest start line of the season. Even though it's only 80 metres – that's 10 short of a football pitch – the Polo R Supercars are still topping 140kph before the boys stand on the middle pedal.

Result:

1 Sébastien Loeb	4m05.108s
2 Petter Solberg	4m05.555s
3 Timmy Hansen	4m06.910s
4 Mattias Ekström	4m07.068s
5 Johan Kristoffersson	4m07.203s
6 Andreas Bakkerud	4m08.139s

Drivers' championship positions:

1 Kristoffersson	75pts
2 Loeb	66pts
3 Solberg	65pts
4 Bakkerud	61pts
5 Ekström	59pts
=Timmy Hansen	59pts

Teams' championship positions:

1 PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	140pts
2 Team Peugeot Total	125pts

3 EKS Audi Sport

120pts

Contact:

Sandra Evans PR manager

sandra@pettersolberg.no

+44 7887 693993

+46 76 110 7 110

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