

News release  
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## **PSRX Volkswagen Sweden brings sunshine after Spanish rain**

- PSRX Volkswagen Sweden leads both WRX championships after round one
- Champ Johan starts the season with a win in Catalunya
- Petter's perfect weekend spoiled in the final's first corner
- Team delighted with winter work on Volkswagen Polo R Supercar

Defending champions PSRX Volkswagen Sweden and Johan Kristoffersson began the new FIA World Rallycross season in the same way they ended the last one...at the top of the table.

Johan's team-mate and fellow Volkswagen Polo R Supercar driver Petter Solberg – making his 50<sup>th</sup> World RX start in Barcelona – was the fastest man throughout the weekend, but a collision at the first corner of the final left the three-time FIA World Champion in the tyres and at the back of the pack.

The race director initiated an investigation into the incident and Mattias Ekström was subsequently disqualified.

With Johan taking maximum points from the final and Petter bringing his car home fifth, the pair gave the team plenty to cheer as they topped by the drivers' and teams' standings after the first of the season's 12 races.

The opening day of the 2018 campaign was greeted by grey skies and heavy rain, turning the Catalan track Teflon. But you don't get to win a World Rally Championship title without knowing the fastest way through the mud, Petter led the field on Saturday night.

The sun arrived for Sunday and the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden boys made the most of it, locking out the front row of the first semi-final. From pole, Petter drove the perfect race, twice posting a new fastest lap. Johan lost out at the first corner, but recovered to power past Andreas Bakkerud with a stunning joker lap.

Then came the final, a first-corner incident for Petter and ultimately Johan's first World RX of Catalunya-Barcelona victory.

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

### **Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) #1**

This was quite a tough start to the new year, so to come away with a win, I am very happy.

It was a hard fight and a tough weekend, one with lots of hits. Starting out with the new car in those conditions [on Saturday] was quite tricky, the grip was so low across the whole lap. Like Petter said, it was a day to survive and having both the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden Polos in the top three was a good sign of the work the team has done through the winter.

The semi-final went well and gave us a great result and a good position for the final. I'm sorry for what happened to Petter in that first corner. It's been a tough weekend, but we come away with the points and that's what counts at the end of the season.

### **Petter Solberg (NOR) #11**

What can I say? I am very sad for what happened in the final.

Until that last race, everything was perfect for me. I'd had the perfect weekend. The conditions were terrible yesterday (Saturday). [Sébastien] Loeb and I have driven through some pretty bad rain and terrible weather in the World Rally Championship, but neither of us had ever seen anything like that. That was a day for surviving!

We came to today and qualifying was going well and I controlled the semi with a really nice drive to make the final and then we got to the first corner...

What I am happy with is the way the team worked this weekend and the way the mechanics and all of the guys have come together to make this car so good. Johan gave us a great result, so I'm happy for him. Hey, we are one-two in the championship and leading the teams' as well. We take our speed and we move on from here.

Before I go, I want to say a very big thank you to all the fans who came – especially the ones who were here in the rain yesterday! These rallycross fans, they are proper fans and some of the best in the world.

### **Pernilla Solberg (PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team principal)**

We are leading both championships and Johan took his first win at this track, which is a great result.

But we are so disappointed for Petter. He was brilliant in the rain yesterday and controlled everything so well today. He deserved more than what happened in the final, but the officials have given their verdict and there's nothing more to say about this.

We look to the positives and to have had both the Volkswagen Polo R Supercars right at the front of the field all the way through the race weekend is fantastic news for the whole team.

Honestly, we all worked so hard since South Africa at the end of last year. I want to thank Monster Energy, Volkswagen Sweden, Jost [Capito Volkswagen R managing director] and all of our hugely valued sponsors.

And, of course, I can't leave without a word for Sven Smeets and everybody at Volkswagen Motorsport. The work and detail they have put in is incredible. Those guys gave us a really fast race car this weekend.

### **Volkswagen R Performance fact of the weekend:**

In the six-lap final, the Volkswagen Polo R Supercar's turbocharger rotated three-quarters of a million times.

### **Result:**

<b>1 Johan Kristoffersson</b>	<b>4m36.568s</b>
2 Sébastien Loeb	4m37.783s
3 Andreas Bakkerud	4m38.957s
4 Niclas Grönholm	4m43.667s
<b>5 Petter Solberg</b>	<b>4m47.832s</b>
6 Mattias Ekström	4m36.039s

### **Drivers' championship positions:**

<b>1 Kristoffersson</b>	<b>27pts</b>
<b>2 Solberg</b>	<b>24pts</b>
3 Bakkerud	20pts
4 Ekström	19pts
5 Grönholm	18pts
6 Timmy Hansen	16pts

### **Teams' championship positions:**

<b>1 PSRX Volkswagen Sweden</b>	<b>51pts</b>
2 EKS Audi Sport	39pts
2 Team Peugeot Total	30pts

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