

The Loudon-clear guide to... **Rally Sweden**

What an unforgettable start to a new era for the World Rally Championship M-Sport enjoyed in Monte Carlo. First and third with the Ford Fiesta WRC and Sébastien Ogier, Julien Ingrassia, Ott Tänak and Martin Järveoja. And what a privilege it was for me to be standing on the podium with those guys, having played a part for the team.

Trouble is, I really enjoyed that moment and I want to do it all again in Sweden this week.

Naturally, the dream remains for me to be standing on top of the podium keeping an eye on the watch as a winning co-driver (more news on that in the coming weeks...), but I'm over the moon to be working with M-Sport again on round two. I'm co-ordinating the weather side of things again, which is fantastic experience for me.

I haven't been to Sweden before, but courtesy of the unbelievable weather on the 2010 Galloway Hills Rally I can say I've competed on a full snow event. I was co-driving Graeme Schoneville's Honda Civic and we finished top two-wheel drive car. Being in Britain, we weren't allowed studs, but Graeme did manage to find some really skinny snow tyres. They worked a treat.

That rally was a really strange experience, though. Graeme and I were tearing through the trees, but the only noise came from the engine - the snow was too deep for the clatter of stones on the underside of the car. It was pretty surreal.

That's probably the first time anybody's compared Galloway Hills to the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship. To the week ahead...

Rally in detail

FIA World Rally Championship round 2/13

WRC – WRC2 – WRC3

Date: Thursday February 9 – Sunday January 12

Based: Karlstad/Torsby

Service: Torsby

Stages: 18

Competitive distance: 331.74km (206.14 miles)

Liaison distance: 1083.44km (637.24 miles)

Total distance: 1415.18km (879.39 miles)

Shortest stage: SS1/15 Superspecial Karlstad 1.90km (1.18 miles)

Longest stage: SS9/12 Knon 31.60km (19.63 miles)

Currency: Swedish krona

Time difference: GMT +1

Language: Swedish

Swedish population: 10,006,000

Capital: Stockholm

Sunrise: 0759

Sunset: 1644

Shakedown:

The 7.23km (4.49 miles) shakedown stage is located at Skalla, 8.76km (5.44 miles) from the service park in Torsby. The stage runs from 0800-1130 on Thursday February 9.

Rally Sweden itinerary

Thursday February 9

SS1 Superspecial Karlstad 1 1.90km (1.18 miles) 2008

Friday February 10

SS2 Rjörden 1 18.47km (11.47 miles) 0759

SS3 Hof-Finnskog 1 21.26km (13.21 miles) 0906

SS4 Svullrya 1 24.88km (15.46 miles) 1020

Service Torsby 1143

SS5 Rjörden 2 18.47km (11.47 miles) 1320

SS6 Hof-Finnskog 2 21.26km (13.21 miles) 1427

SS7 Svullrya 2 24.88km (15.46 miles) 1521

SS8 Torsby 1 16.43km (10.20miles) 1715

Service Torsby 1745

Saturday February 11

SS9 Knon 1 31.60km (19.63 miles) 0808

SS10 Hagfors 1 15.87km (9.86 miles) 0917

SS11 Vargåsen 1 14.27km (8.86 miles) 1008

Service Torsby 1104

SS12 Knon 2 31.60km (19.63 miles) 1258

SS13 Hagfors 2 15.87km (9.86 miles) 1417

SS14 Vargåsen 2 14.27km (8.86 miles) 1508

SS15 Superspecial Karlstad 2 1.90km (1.18 miles) 1745

Service Torsby 1931

Sunday February 12

SS16 Likenäs 1 21.19km (13.14 miles) 0755

SS17 Likenäs 2 21.19km (13.14 miles) 0958

SS18 Torsby 2 16.43km (10.20miles) 1218

Finish Karlstad 1300

2016 Rally Sweden result:

WRC: 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

1h59m47.4s; 2 Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (Hyundai i20 New Generation

WRC) +29.8s; 3 Mads Ostberg/Ola Floene (Ford Fiesta WRC) +55.6s. **WRC2:**

Elfyn Evans (Ford Fiesta R5) **WRC3:** Michel Fabre/Maxime Vilmot (DS 3 R3T Max).

Top 20 entries

- 1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 2 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 3 Elfyn Evans/Dan Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 4 Hayden Paddon/John Kennard (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 5 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 6 Dani Sordo/Marc Marti (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 7 Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 8 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 10 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 11 Juho Hanninen/Kaj Lindstrom (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 14 Mads Østberg/Ola Fløene (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 15 Stéphane Lefebvre/Gabin Moreau (DS 3 WRC)

Leading WRC Trophy runners:

- 16 Valeriy Gorban/Sergei Larens (Mini JCW WRC)
- 37 Lorenzo Bertelli/Simone Scattolin (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)

Leading WRC2 runners:

- 31 Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 32 Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 33 Pierre Louis Loubet/Vincent Landals (DS 3 R5)
- 34 Ola Christian Veiby/Stig Skjaermoen (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 35 Anders Grøndal/Roger Eilertsen (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 36 Eyvind Brynildsen/Anders Fredriksson (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 38 Jaroslaw Koltun/Ireneusz Pleskot (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 39 Emil Bergkvist/Joachim Sjöberg (DS 3 R5)
- 40 Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas (Ford Fiesta R5)

Leading WRC3 runners:

- 61 Louise Cook/Stefan Davis (Ford Fiesta R2)

Stuart Loudon's key stage: SS11/15 Vargåsen 14.27km (8.86 miles)

I'm going to be honest here, this Vargåsen test probably isn't going to be a key stage, but given that this is my first trip to Sweden, I have to pay homage to a fellow Scotsman. I don't know how many times I've watched cars flying over Colin's Crest, but it's fantastic to be on an event with a jump named after a McRae. And, of course, a fellow Lanarkshire lad.

Stuart will be watching... #1 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC)

Do you remember the last time we saw Ott and Martin? They were completely crossed up coming across the finish line of SS17, Rallye Monte-Carlo. They had saved third place with an absolutely heroic – if slightly banzai – run down the hill after the Col de Turini. It was brilliant and it delivered a double podium for the M-Sport World Rally Team's Ford Fiesta WRC.

Ott finished the last rally on snow and in spectacular style and I reckon he'll be up for more of the same this week. He's been in the top five on the last

three Rally Swedens and I'm sure he's ready to step up to the podium and, who knows, maybe even the top step on Sunday.

Weather with you:

Cold. And getting colder. There's the chance of some snow around, but it doesn't look like there's loads coming in. But the key factor is the temperature: it doesn't look like the mercury will move above zero once through rally week, which should make for some hard-packed ice on the roads.

Recent winners Rally Sweden:

2006: Marcus Grönholm/Timo Rautiainen (Ford Focus RS WRC 06)
2007: Marcus Grönholm/Timo Rautiainen (Ford Focus RS WRC 06)
2008: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Ford Focus RS WRC 07)
2010: Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Focus RS WRC 09)
2011: Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)
2012: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Ford Fiesta RS WRC)
2013: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)
2014: Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)
2015: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)
2016: Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Volkswagen Polo R WRC)

Most successful driver on Rally Sweden:

Stig Blomqvist/Marcus Grönholm (5 wins)

Stuart's 2017 World Rally Championship stats...

Stages planned: 17

Stages run: 15

Total competitive distance travelled: 355.90km (221.15 miles)

Total distance travelled: 1411.85km (877.32 miles)

Winners' total competitive time: 4h00m03.6s

Longest stage of the season: Aspres les Corps-Chaillol 38.94km (24.19 miles)

Rallye Monte-Carlo

Shorest stage of the season: Luceram-Col St Roch 5.50km (3.41 miles) Rallye Monte-Carlo

WRC fastest times: Thierry Neuville 6; Sébastien Ogier/Elfyn Evans 3; Ott Tänak/Dani Sordo/Stéphane Lefebvre 1.

WRC stages led: Neuville 11; Ogier 5.

WRC2 fastest times: Andreas Mikkelsen 9; Jan Kopecky 3; Bryan Bouffier/Pontus Tidemand 1.

WRC2 stages led: Mikkelsen 16.

WRC3 fastest times: Raphael Astier 11; Charles Martin 3; Luca Panzani 1.

WRC3 stages led: Astier 16.

R-GT fastest times: Romain Dumas 10; François Delecour 3; Fabio Andolfi 2.

R-GT stages led: Dumas 9; Delecour 4; Andolfi 3.

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Stuart Loudon is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 88 rallies, 19 of which are rounds of the World Rally Championship and one of which was with an Ashes-winning English cricketer. He makes biscuits in the family business when he's not working towards his dream of becoming a factory co-driver in the WRC.

Stuart Loudon and Words PR work their socks off to make sure every last dot and detail of the document is 100 per cent accurate – but we can't be responsible for any changes to the itinerary or stage distances.