

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

The stage is set for the snow men (and women)

Welcome to winter. And proper winter. Providing there's no radical change between this being written and the first stage starting, next week's Rally Sweden has all the makings of an absolute classic.

The weather has played ball this year: snowing on demand, warming up and thawing in quick succession, then freezing hard at the pivotal point. Perfect.

Who's going to win? Who knows. Despite a tough opener, there's confidence, self-belief and a very quick car at Hyundai; the Toyota pace in the Alps last month was clear for all to see and Citroen's had time to work on its C3 WRC, but M-Sport's Ford Fiesta WRC remained the car to beat on round one.

The day one pace could be dictated by the weather; heavy snow on Thursday night would hit Sébastien Ogier's chances hard – and bring about a flurry of snow plough analogies.

Before Sweden, I'll be swapping making the world's tastiest Snowballs and turning my attention to the Snowman Rally. I'm co-driving Lawrence Whyte (18, Aberdeen) in a Ford Fiesta R5 at the opening round of the Scottish Rally Championship on Saturday (February 10).

### **Rally Sweden in detail**

FIA World Rally Championship round 2/13

WRC – WRC2 – WRC3 – JWRC

Date: Thursday February 15 – Sunday February 18

Based: Torsby

Service: Torsby airport

Stages: 19

Competitive distance: 314.25km (195.27 miles)

Liaison distance: 1086.54km (675.17 miles)

Total distance: 1400.79km (870.45 miles)

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

Longest stage: SS3/6 Svullyra 24.88km (15.46 miles)

Currency: Swedish krona

Time difference: GMT +1

Sunrise: 0757

Sunset: 1644

### **Shakedown:**

The 6.86km (4.26 miles) shakedown stage is located at Skalla 9.10km (5.65 miles) from Torsby Service Park. The stage runs from 0800-1330 on Thursday February 15.

## **Rally Sweden itinerary**

Thursday February 15

SS1 SSS Karlstad 1 1.90km (1.18 miles) 2008

Parc Fermé Torsby 2154

Friday February 16

SS2 Hof-Finnskog 1 21.26km (13.21 miles) 0755

SS3 Svullyra 1 24.88km (15.46 miles) 0907

SS4 Røjden 1 19.13km (11.88 miles) 0954

Service Torsby 1116

SS5 Hof-Finnskog 2 21.26km (13.21 miles) 1341

SS6 Svullyra 2 24.88km (15.46 miles) 1503

SS7 Røjden 2 19.13km (11.88 miles) 1550

SS8 Torsby 1 9.56km (5.94 miles) 1656

Service Torsby 1721

Parc Fermé 1816

Saturday February 17

SS9 Torntorp 1 19.88km (12.35 miles) 0754

SS10 Hagfors 1 23.40km (14.54 miles) 0912

SS11 Vargåsen 1 14.21km (8.83 miles) 1008

Service Torsby 1108

SS12 Torntorp 2 19.88km (12.35 miles) 1244

SS13 Hagfors 2 23.40km (14.54 miles) 1412

SS14 Vargåsen 2 14.21km (8.83 miles) 1508

SS15 SSS Karlstad 2 1.90km (1.18 miles) 1754

SS16 Torsby Sprint 3.43km (2.13 miles) 1926

Service Torsby 1946

Parc Fermé 2041

Sunday February 18

SS17 Likenäs 1 21.19km (13.16 miles) 0750

SS18 Likenäs 2 21.19km (13.16 miles) 0951

SS19 Torsby 2 9.56km (5.94 miles) 1218

Finish 1238

## **2017 Rally Sweden result:**

**WRC:** 1 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC) 2h36.03m.06s; 2 Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Ford Fiesta WRC) +29.2s; 3 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC) +59.5s **WRC2:** Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia R5).

## **Top 10 running order:**

1 Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC)

- 8 Ott Tänak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 7 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 10 Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 5 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 2 Elfyn Evans/Dan Barritt (Ford Fiesta WRC)
- 9 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Toyota Yaris WRC)
- 4 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger (Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)
- 11 Craig Breen/Scott Martin (Citroën C3 WRC)
- 12 Mads Østberg/Torstein Eriksen (Citroën C3 WRC)

### **Leading WRC championship positions:**

1 Ogier 26pts; 2 Tänak 18pts; 3 Latvala 17pts; 4 Meeke 17pts; 5 Neuville 14pts; 6 Evans 8pts.

### **Leading WRC2 runners:**

- 31 Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 32 Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjæmoen (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 33 Lukasz Pieniazek/Przemyslaw Mazur (Škoda Fabia R5)
- 34 Jari Huttunen/Antti Linnaketo (Hyundai i20 R5)
- 35 Takamoto Katsuta/Marko Salminen (Ford Fiesta R5)
- 36 Hiroki Arai/Glenn Macneall (Ford Fiesta R5)

### **Leading WRC2 championship positions:**

1 Kopecky 25pts; 2 Scießere 18pts; 3 Suninen 15pts.

### **Leading WRC3/JWRC runners:**

- 61 Emil Bergkvist/Ola Fløene (Ford Fiesta R2)
- 62 Terry Folb/Christopher Guieu (Ford Fiesta R2)
- 63 Dennis Rådström/Johan Johansson (Ford Fiesta R2)
- 64 Ralfs Sirmacis/Arturs Simins (Ford Fiesta R2)
- 65 Ken Torn/Kuldar Sikk (Ford Fiesta R2)
- 66 Julius Tannert/Jürgen Heigl (Ford Fiesta R2)

### **Leading WRC3 championship positions:**

1 Brazzoli 25pts; 2 Molle 18pts; Lario 15pts.

### **Stuart Loudon's key stage:** SS11/14 Vargåsen 1 14.21km (8.83 miles)

In the conditions the crews are likely to face next week, every stage will be just fantastic to compete on – but Vargåsen is always something a bit special. Why? Because of a flying Scot called Colin.

Mid-way through the stage there's a longish right-hander that opens out onto a straight. At the end of that straight is one of the season's longest and most famous leaps: Colin's Crest. The crowds here are enormous and a special prize is given to the crew that fly furthest (current record 45m, Eyvind Brynildsen, Ford Fiesta R5 in

2016).

Going ballistic here requires real bravery and an ability to look two, three or four corners ahead. The road curves gently to the right on landing, but at the speed you touch down everything has to be set up right with the car pointing in the right direction.

**Stuart will be watching... #9 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Toyota Yaris WRC)**  
Remember what happened last time the World Rally Championship ventured to northern Europe? Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm delivered an incredible maiden WRC win. And I think they have the potential to put down victory number two next week.

As Toyota Gazoo Racing team principal Tommi Makinen said recently, Sweden is his team's backyard. The Yaris WRC was born and brought up in a place where snow's a regular occurrence for four or five months of the year and Jari-Matti Latvala's win in Karlstad 12 months ago offered a graphic demonstration of how comfortable the Toyota is in those conditions.

Lappi's team-mates Latvala and Ott Tänak are also worth watching this week, but for me the younger of Toyota's two Finns could be the man; he's likely to have the best of the conditions on the opening day and he's increasingly showing he has the maturity to bring results home (apart from on that gravelly right-hander on the Monte powerstage!).

### **Weather with you:**

Snow showers are forecast in the stages throughout the week, with temperatures dipping as low as -12 overnight and unlikely to rise above zero during the day.

### **Most successful driver on Rally Sweden:**

Stig Blomqvist (7 wins)

### **2018 World Rally Championship stats...**

Stages planned: 17

Stages run: 17

Longest stage of the season: Thoard-Sisteron 36.69km (22.79 miles) Rallye Monte-Carlo

Shortest stage of the season: La Cabanette-Col de Braus 13.58km (8.43 miles) Rallye Monte-Carlo

### **Most WRC fastest times in 2018:**

1 Neuville 5; 2 Tänak/Ogier 4; 4 Evans 2; 5 Meeke/Mikkelsen 1

Most WRC stages led in 2018:

1 Ogier 17

**Top three WRC2 fastest times in 2018:**

1 Jan Kopecky/Suninen 6; 3 Kevin Abbring 3; 4 Eric Camilli 2

Top three WRC2 stages led in 2018:

1 Kopecky 14; 2 Camilli 3

**Rally Sweden media contact:**

Jonas Bjällfalk

T: +46 (0)70 530 24 30

E: [jonas@rallysweden.com](mailto:jonas@rallysweden.com)

**Stuart Loudon media contact:**

Sandra Evans

[Sandra@wordspr.com](mailto:Sandra@wordspr.com)

+ 44 7887 693993

**Stuart Loudon** is a semi-professional co-driver who has started 97 rallies, 20 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.

*Stats courtesy of [ewrc-results.com](http://ewrc-results.com)*