

News release
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PSRX Volkswagen Sweden aims to turn good to great in Belgium

- Championship leaders look for even greater focus in Belgium
- Last year's winner Johan's on a hat-trick at Circuit Jules Tacheny
- Petter's all about the detail in Belgium
- Has spring sprung? PSRX Volkswagen Sweden weather prepared

What's coming?

A return to the place where the winning started for PSRX Volkswagen Sweden 12 months ago. The team had come close to scaling the podium's top step on rounds one and two in 2017, but Circuit Jules Tacheny, Belgium is where it all came good.

Last year, Johan won. Petter got a problem while in the lead when he might well have won.

This time around, PSRX Volkswagen Sweden arrives in Mettet at the top of the drivers' and teams' championship after back-to-back wins and three podiums from a possible four so far in 2018.

Johan's chasing a 10th win from the last 11 World RX rounds while the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden Polo R Supercar hunts of a 12th win from 13 events.

But those results are done. Banked. Only to be cashed in and looked back fondly upon in the future. PSRX Volkswagen Sweden is preparing for the next challenge; the team's strategists are poring over race data and plotting another route to the top. But they're doing it with their feet firmly on the ground. These races are getting closer; the competition tougher.

Despite the early 2018 success, the start of the season has been a little bit topsy-turvy at times. PSRX Volkswagen Sweden is looking to steady the ship starting with this week's World RX of Belgium.

Pernilla, why do you need to steady the ship after two wins?

PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team principal Pernilla Solberg

"The start of the season has been quite a strange one. Petter had great pace in Barcelona, but missed out on the win, while Johan struggled early on in round one but then drove beautifully to win on Sunday in Spain. And then last time in Portugal, with the weather and the changing conditions and grip levels, everything went a little bit crazy.

"After Portugal, we took some time to talk about where we felt we were behind, why that was and how we were going to put it right. We were very honest, we prioritised and, as usual, the team worked really hard to make everything right.

“But... I’m not going to tell you any specifics about what we have worked on since Portugal. What we have done is gone away, quietly re-prepared ourselves and now we’re ready to hit the ground running even faster in Belgium. Mettet is quite a specific circuit, one that commands a lot of forward planning and set-up work. The boys have been in contact with their engineers all the time.

“It would just be nice to get out there and see some sun – especially for the fans. We’re PSRX Volkswagen *Sweden*, we like the snow; we love the snow – but spring has sprung, so let’s have some sunshine after the winter rewind last time out.”

Petter, when are you going to win?

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

“Just as soon as I can beat my team-mate! And this is even more important now he has overtaken me in terms of overall WRX wins – he has 11 and I only have 10!

“Like Pernilla said, those first two races have been quite strange. We were really quick, probably the fastest, at round one, but we had no luck. Then in Portugal last time we struggled a little bit, but we made the podium! You know me, you know how much I want to win, more than anything. I’m really happy to see Johan on the top step, but I think I’m ready for a go up there as well now!

“I’ve never won this race in Belgium, but I came close last year, I should have had this one last year. But this sport comes down to the fine details and these are what we are working so hard on right now. We are working harder than ever on our strategy, we’re looking at everything we can do to bring a small advantage. But at the same time, we’re early in the season and this isn’t the time to be taking big risks.

“I want the win, but I won’t risk everything for it. We have to be sensible, add the points all the time. I’m definitely not going to get stressed about this. I know we had the speed in Barcelona and then we got some bad luck in Portugal – like when they put the gravel out in the qualifying heats. We got some really slippery conditions and could only make 10th fastest in that heat.

“That’s the difference in World RX today – you have something small, some small detail that doesn’t work for you and you are 10th. That’s why we focus on detail.”

Tell us about Mettet, Johan...

Johan Kristoffersson, defending FIA World Rallycross Champion

"It's a nice track. It's not my favourite, I wouldn't say that, but it's a good place to race and it's definitely somewhere I have good memories – this is where we took our first win with the new team last year.

"It's the kind of place where you really have to be on your toes, you have to be ready to adapt to the conditions changing really quickly. But this is a very different track to Montalegre in Portugal – and hopefully we'll have some very different weather as well.

"One of the things we learned in Portugal – and from Barcelona as well – was the importance of not focusing on anything except for what we're doing. We don't get distracted by anybody, any other team or anything. All the time now we are just looking at Petter and me and the PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team; what can we do? How can we be better?"

"As well as that, it's so important to stay calm, stick to the plan and work the strategy. The trouble is, the last round was such a freak event with the crazy weather and conditions. But that showed how this team doesn't panic, we pull together, we make the results and we do this by maximizing our own performance."

Driver data

Petter Solberg (NOR)

World RX starts: 51

World RX wins: 10

World RX titles: 2

Johan Kristoffersson (SWE)

World RX starts: 42

World RX wins: 11

World RX titles: 1

World RX of Belgium data

Last year's winner: Johan Kristoffersson (SWE)

Fastest lap: Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) 38.074s

Circuit length: 1.149km

Asphalt/gravel: 61% – 39%

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