

News release

September 30, 2018

Johan The Champion

- Johan Kristoffersson wins the 2018 FIA World Rallycross Championship*
- He scores a ninth win from 10 races to seal the drivers' title
- Petter Solberg is back to his absolute best, just missing the win in second
- It's time for a song...

Some music while you read this one? No, it's not Queen. It's Carrie. And Ludacris. But there is a common theme...

The Champion. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgknAaKNaMM>).

The song featured in both the Winter Olympics and Super Bowl LII, but we know American country singer Carrie Underwood had our man Johan on her mind when she was writing the lyrics for her and Ludacris.

Two hands up in the air, I'm a champion.

You'll be looking up at me when it's over.

I am invincible, unbreakable. Unstoppable, unshakeable.

They knock me down, I get up again. I am the champion.

Except Johan's not just a champion, he's a double champion*; a back-to-back world title winner; a successful defender of the FIA World Rallycross Championship.

Johan came to the land of opportunity prospecting for gold and he found it at the Circuit of the Americas, Austin, Texas.

Second place in the semi-final was enough for Johan to be crowned champion. Delighted as he was with the title, Johan was already looking to ice the cake with a win in the final.

And he did it. Of course he did. A ninth win from 10 races was the perfect way to sign-off on a second world title.

There was double delight for PRSX Volkswagen Sweden with team owner and driver Petter back to the sort of sensational form which has carried him to his own back-to-back World RX titles in 2014/15.

The Norwegian led overnight after a storming run to fastest times in Q1 and Q2 on Saturday, he then won his semi-final and was looking good for a first win of 2018 in the final when he slid wide and dropped to second behind Johan.

It was fitting that 'Hollywood' showed his true colours in America, but the fairytale finish was saved for Johan this time.

Talking of Johan, if you want to talk to him, head north... to the top of the world. That's where he's at right now.

Driver	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	INTER	SF	F
Johan Kristoffersson	3	2	3	1	3	3	1
Petter Solberg	1	1	2	4	1	1	2

Johan Kristoffersson (SWE) #1

"What an incredible feeling. The title is what I came here for and it's so nice to have it. Obviously, there was some pressure in practice and qualifying and the championship was in my mind – even if I kept trying to push it to the back.

"Saturday was OK, I was a little bit stuck in traffic, so maybe it didn't look so good, but I was really happy with Q2 and Q4. In that race (Q4), I felt like everything was working like it should and I was able to make some good pace. The team had put such a good car beneath me, I knew it was possible to do this speed and, like it always does, gave me such good confidence.

"The semi was weird! I came through the last corner and I was a world champion, but still there was this race to come. I was so focused on the racing, there was no time to think to anything else. I made a good pass on [Mattias] Ekström in the semi and that was really important for the final.

"The final was going well and we were looking really good for the one-two when Petter slid a little bit wide in one corner. I took the gap and won. Of course, this is so special to win. To take the title like this is really special.

"You know I am so proud of what I've achieved this season. Winning last year was a massive thing for me, but to defend the title in the way that I have been able to is something very special. I have a lot of people to thank for this, including the whole PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team. Honestly, this is such a special bunch of people, both from the PSRX and the Volkswagen side. We work so well together, everything works.

“And, of course, I have to thank my team-mate Petter. This hasn’t been the easiest year for him, but this weekend he showed he is right at the top of his driving again and it’s so good to have him back to his best. I’ll be honest, I think Petter deserved the win this time.”

“I won the 2018 TCR Scandinavia title last week and now this. Incredible. Maybe it’s time for a small celebration, maybe one or two beers tonight.”

Petter Solberg (NOR) #11

“I was really happy with the start to the weekend. Qualifying on Saturday was fantastic, I was very happy to be leading after Q2. It’s been a tough year and to come out and win both of those Saturday qualifying races gave me an unbelievable feeling again.

“Sunday was really good as well, we came through the semi in a good way and the final was looking perfect. I braked a little bit too late and couldn’t get the car turned to the left-hander before the jump. I took the handbrake and slid a little bit wide.

“That one I gave to Johan, my mistake. I wanted that win so badly. It has been a tough season, but I really feel like I’m back.

“I am tired now, but it’s been a physically hard weekend with the heat in the car and I’ll be honest, with the illness I haven’t been able to train so much as I wanted to. But now I’m going to be in the gym and fighting like hell for those last two races.

“I have to say I am so proud of Johan and of the whole team. This was a hot, hot race, but the Polo R Supercars were just perfect – there wasn’t any problem with them at all. Volkswagen Motorsport is doing an incredible job.”

Pernilla Solberg (PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team principal)

“What a weekend! And, let’s be honest, what a season for Johan! He is champion and we are so, so happy for that. He has been incredible and, to be honest, completely unstoppable and invincible this year. And there are still two rounds to come!

“To win nine from 10 races is really something special and we are so pleased and happy to have him in the team. He’s amazing.

“That is the first part of this year’s job done, now we have to turn our attentions to the teams’ title. We took another good number of points away from America, but we want a double double!

“We are a very happy team tonight. Johan’s such a good guy, it’s brilliant for him and Tommy [Johan’s father], but as well as that it’s been amazing to see Petter coming back with such a strong fight. Honestly, I thought this was going to be Petter’s win, but it wasn’t to be. Of course, he is a little disappointed and as his wife I would have loved to have seen him on the

top step of the podium, but this is a very nice way for Johan to seal his story of two titles in two years."

Volkswagen R performance fact:

The speed of the turbo is so high that if the compressor wheel was let free to roll as the cars joined the start line, it would complete five laps of the circuit before the lights turn green for the race to start!

#JohantheChamp

First event: World RX of Sweden 06.07.14

First victory: World RX of Portugal 26.04.15

Events: 51

Event victories: 18

Podiums: 27

Finals: 38

Qualifying wins: 52

Races in total: 298

Total points: 1104

Result:

1 Johan Kristoffersson	3m31.118s
2 Petter Solberg	3m31.718s
3 Andreas Bakkerud	3m32.813s
4 Sébastien Loeb	3m33.441s
5 Timmy Hansen	3m35.954s
6 Mattias Ekström	3m39.187s

Drivers' championship positions:

1 Kristoffersson	281pts
2 Ekström	204pts
3 Solberg	202pts
4 Bakkerud	200pts
5 Loeb	195pts
6 T Hansen	163pts

Teams' championship positions:

1 PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	483pts
2 EKS Audi Sport	404pts
3 Team Peugeot Total	358pts

**subject to confirmation from the FIA*

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