

News release
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Solbergs say hello and goodbye on Wales Rally GB

- Solbergs to drive a pair of Volkswagen Polo GTI R5s at Wales Rally GB
- Petter delighted to end his professional WRC career alongside Oliver
- Oliver delighted to start his WRC career alongside Petter

Petter Solberg – Mr. Hollywood – the World Rally Championship’s most charismatic driver will end his professional career at Wales Rally GB driving Volkswagen Motorsport’s Polo GTI R5.

The 2003 World Rally Champion is no stranger to Britain’s WRC counter, he’s started it 15 times and won it four. Between 2002 and 2005, he and co-driver Phil Mills dominated the world championship’s Welsh stages.

Oliver Solberg was one year old when his father started that extraordinary period of dominance of Wales Rally GB. This year he’ll be 18 and he will make his WRC debut in an identical Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 to that of his father in Wales.

The Llandudno-based, October 3-6 event marks the changing of the WRC guard in the Solberg household. The next generation has arrived on the sport’s highest stage.

Petter said: “Wales Rally GB has always been a special one for me and the chance to bring my professional World Rally Championship career to a close there is fantastic.

“There are so many memories from this rally, it’s an event which has really been one of the highlights of my career – winning my first ever WRC round, then winning the championship a year later was so special. And so special for my co-driver Phil [Mills], who lives there.

“It is going to be an emotional rally, especially competing on a WRC round for the first time with my son Oliver. It’s an incredible moment for the Solberg family as one chapter closes and another one opens.”

Petter announced his Farewell Tour earlier this season and kicked that off with an outstanding trip to the Goodwood Festival of Speed (July 4-7), where he and Oliver stole the show – not to mention the hearts of hundreds of thousands of fans – as they turned on the speed and style in West Sussex.

Petter continued: "Rally GB is part of my Farewell Tour which is something that's so important to me. I didn't want to just make a press release talking about what I'd done in the sport and what a good time I'd had. I always wanted to get out there and do what I've always loved to do, what my life has been about: driving competitively.

"All of my career, the fans and spectators have been really close with me and I want this chance to see them all again and give them something to smile about. I started with the Festival of Speed at Goodwood which was a fantastic event – I'm sure Wales is going to be the same as well.

"But as well as thanking the fans and the media, I have to say a big thank you to Volkswagen Motorsport for their support with my Farewell Tour and to my long-term partner Monster Energy.

For me and for once, the competition isn't absolutely everything. Like I say, I want to enjoy this rally and driving Volkswagen's Polo GTI R5 and I really can't wait to share a round of the world championship with Oliver. I hope I can share this moment with you as well."

Oliver's entry on Rally GB is, obviously, dependent on him passing his driving test in Sweden ahead of the event.

Oliver Solberg Q&A

How does it feel to be making your WRC debut at Wales Rally GB?

"Fantastic. Just incredible. I have so many memories of papa driving and winning in this rally. Earlier this year I was over doing some testing in the Sweet Lamb stage and honestly it gave me the [goose]bumps on my arm when I was driving there for the first time. I remember so much from watching this place on the television and then driving it in the [WRC] game."

Will it help to have your father close by?

"Of course it will. Firstly, he's my hero, so to have him with me at any time is just great, but to have this guy who won the rally and knows these roads and these conditions so well will be a big, big deal for me."

What do you think's possible from the event?

"I said all the time this season, I just want to enjoy myself. I just want to take the experience and enjoy the driving. I'm not going to try to make a big star or anything like that – I need to make the finish and find out more about what I heard is one of the most technical rallies in the season.

Will you beat him?

"I really don't know, but for sure, his is going to be the first time I'm looking towards at the end of every stage."

Petter Solberg CV:

Age: 44

Co-driver: Phil Mills
WRC rounds started: 189
WRC titles: 1
WRC rounds won: 13
WRC podiums: 52
WRC points: 852
WRC stage wins: 457
Wales Rally GB starts: 15
Wales Rally GB wins: 4

Oliver Solberg CV:

Age: 17 (and $\frac{3}{4}$)
Co-driver: Aaron Johnston
WRC rounds started: 0
WRC titles: 0
WRC rounds won: 0
WRC podiums: 0
WRC points: 0
WRC stage wins: 0
Wales Rally GB starts: 0
Wales Rally GB wins: 0

Rally detail

Wales Rally GB
Date: October 3-6
Based: Llandudno
Stages: 22
Surface: Gravel
Competitive distance: 316.50km (196.67 miles)
Total distance: 1343.80km (835.03 miles)
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