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WRC comeback with Volkswagen: Petter Solberg to drive the new Polo GTI R5 in Spain

- 2003 world rally champion returns to the scene of his last WRC rally
- Three world champions in one rally: Sébastien Loeb, Sébastien Ogier and Petter Solberg
- Debut for the new Polo GTI R5 for customer sport only planned outing as works team

Wolfsburg (D) – He’s back! 2003 champion Petter Solberg (N) returns to the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) with the Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. Solberg and co-driver Veronica Engan (N) will compete in the WRC 2 class at the Rally Spain in Catalonia from 25 to 28 October. Six years after his last rally in 2012, the Norwegian will make his comeback in precisely the same place, at which he called time on his rally career. Solberg, who drives a Polo for his PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team in the FIA World Rallycross Championship (WRX), will briefly change fields. The Polo GTI R5 will make its competitive debut at the Rally Spain, which will be the car’s only outing with the Volkswagen works team. The R5 rally car will then be run by customer teams in national and international championships.



WRC comeback with Volkswagen: Petter Solberg to drive the new Polo GTI R5 at Rally Spain

“The opportunity to make a WRC comeback with Volkswagen is a unique one, and I was very happy to accept the offer,” said Solberg. “When I drove the car in January in Sweden, I didn’t want to stop. Everything about the Polo GTI R5 worked from the very beginning. I am really looking forward to the Rally Spain. I always used to like the combination of gravel and

asphalt. It will obviously be a special feeling to return to the place I brought the curtain down on my rally career back in 2012. It will be a fantastic reunion with the WRC Family, but one with a professional background. I obviously want to get the R5 Polo off to a good start with a good result.”

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Volkswagen Motorsport Director, Sven Smeets: "Petter is a true rally hero. We have already experienced his passion and professionalism working alongside him in World Rallycross. To give everything, always 110 per cent is Petter's trademark. He has tested the Polo GTI R5 and has always been one of our preferred candidates for the debut of our new customer sport car. It is fantastic that he will drive the R5 Polo in Spain. Everyone in the team is looking forward to the rally and to working with Petter and his team-mate Eric Camilli."

Petter Solberg returns to his rallying roots

Solberg returns to the WRC from the WRX for a weekend. This sees the Norwegian return to his rallying roots. Between 1998 and 2012, he made 188 appearances in the World Rally Championship – with Toyota, Ford, Subaru and Citroën. In 2003, Solberg won the world championship title with Subaru, ending the season just one point ahead of eventual record-breaking champion Sébastien Loeb and third-placed Spaniard Carlos Sainz. He remains the last nordic world rally champion. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, Solberg competed in the WRC with his own team. He then spent one final year as a works driver with Ford in 2012. Solberg claimed 52 podium results in the World Rally Championship, 13 of them victories. The Rally Spain marks Solberg's first rally with Volkswagen, and his debut in an R5 car.

Three world champions in one WRC rally for the first time for eight years

Solberg is the third world rally champion set to drive at the 2018 Rally Spain, where he will line up against reigning champion Sébastien Ogier and the returning Sébastien Loeb. As such, the last three men to win the title will all compete in Spain – albeit in different classes. The last time three world champions raced at the same event was the 2010 Rally Finland (Loeb, Solberg, Kankkunen).

Solberg and Volkswagen in the WRX – an extremely successful combination

After switching from WRC to WRX, the 43-year-old won the Drivers' title in both 2014 and 2015. Volkswagen Motorsport and Solberg's PSRX team announced a partnership at the start of 2017. This has proven to be a winning combination: the team took the Team title and was behind the world champion, Johan Kristoffersson (S), in its very first year. Volkswagen is responsible for the development and technical preparation of the two Polo R Supercars, while PSRX Volkswagen Sweden looks after the logistics, on-site running of the car, and the marketing side of things. Solberg



remains the only driver to have won the Drivers' title in two different FIA world championships.

About the Volkswagen brand: "We make the future real"

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2017, Volkswagen delivered 6.23 million vehicles, including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta or Passat. Currently, 198,000 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has over 7,700 dealerships with 74,000 employees.

Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production.

E-mobility, smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand are the key strategic topics for the future.
