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MOTORSPORT INFORMATION

Audi in the 2018 FIA World Rallycross Championship

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Audi in the World RX

EKS Audi Sport with clear aims

Audi remains involved in rallycross in the 2018 season. The manufacturer based in Ingolstadt continues to support Mattias Ekström's project with a factory-backed commitment. Under its new name, EKS Audi Sport, and with two newly developed Audi S1 EKS RX quattro cars the team contests the FIA World Rallycross Championship (World RX). Alongside team principal and driver Ekström, new signing Andreas Bakkerud, one of the most successful rallycross campaigners, will be on the grid in the second car.

Long-standing Audi factory driver Mattias Ekström had formed his team in early 2014 and went on to lead it to the top of the world's ranking with great personal commitment within the space of just three years. In 2016, Ekström and EKS in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro won both the drivers' and the teams' world championships against strong competition from Ford, Peugeot, Volkswagen and numerous privateer teams. In the 2017 season, Audi came on board. Thanks to the factory-backed support, the project was successfully continued last year. Ekström finished the World Championship by celebrating as the runner-up and EKS secured third place in the teams' classification.

Looking at the new season, Ekström and his team, EKS Audi Sport, are full of zest for action: "With support from Audi we're able to go for all-out attack," says the Swede. "Our aim for 2018 is clear: We're battling for the drivers' and teams' world championship titles." To achieve this aim, EKS Audi Sport is racing with two new Audi S1 EKS RX quattro cars. "It was logical that we needed to make some changes to be in contention for top positions. That's why we're preparing two new cars that we'd like to outstrip the competition from Volkswagen and Peugeot with."

Audi Sport is involved in this endeavor more than ever before. While the main focus when the brand entered the championship in 2017 was still placed on development work and support of tests and races, the further development of the now 580-hp Audi S1 EKS RX quattro was intensively driven for the 2018 season. The Supercar (top rallycross category), among other things, is provided with a new aerodynamics package which enhances performance. Audi employees will be present at the race tracks for all twelve World RX events to provide EKS Audi Sport with engine support. However, the team based in Fagersta, Sweden, will continue to independently field the cars.

Interview with Head of Audi Motorsport Dieter Gass

“Convinced of World RX growth potential”

Head of Audi Motorsport Dieter Gass about the development of rallycross, the status quo in the World Championship and the potential fielding of electric cars from the brand with the four rings in the racing series.

In 2018, Audi Sport is continuing its commitments in the DTM, Formula E and World RX. How do you gauge Audi’s rallycross program?

Last year, rallycross with a factory-backed commitment was an all-new program for us. In 2017, we gathered very positive experiences in World RX and are convinced of the series’ growth potential. Even though it’s an FIA world championship, it’s still our smallest program, but a very important one nevertheless.

Why did Audi in 2017 decide to provide factory-backed support to EKS?

We’d been watching the project at Audi with interest ever since its launch in 2014. After three years, we decided to provide technical support to Mattias Ekström against increasingly strong competition. Victory in the drivers’ and teams’ world championships in 2016 provided additional impetus to get on board. However, another key factor for us is that in the medium term the fielding of electric cars might be possible in rallycross. Electrification is a focus topic for us.

How do you assess the chances for electric rallycross?

The FIA is pursuing the aim of holding the World RX also with electric cars starting in 2020. Crucial to this plan is the existence of a set of sporting and technical regulations that make cost-efficient and sustainable racing possible. Interested brands will be able to sign up for the planned electric racing series until July 2018. The homologation of the cars is targeted for February 2020.

What are the key next steps for you?

To keep control of costs and deploy leading-edge technology, the FIA is going to define a battery pack that all manufacturers will have to use in their cars. An invitation to tender for the batteries has already been issued, so looking for a battery supplier for the years of 2020 to 2023. In parallel, there’s a call for bids for a carbon monocoque chassis. The plan is for the suppliers selected for the batteries and chassis to jointly work on the integration of the systems.



What will Audi's role look like if specification parts are used?

We have a comparable situation in Formula E. Specification batteries and chassis are used there as well. But that does not yet give you a ready-to-drive rallycross car. Other components are supposed to be released for manufacturer development, for instance the electric motors. It is planned that an electric motor with 250 kW of power output will be installed on each axle.

How do you judge the development of rallycross?

In recent years, rallycross racing, and particularly the World Rallycross Championship, has seen an incredible gain in popularity. You can also tell this by the fact that we're not the only manufacturer involved. Rallycross events are spectacular, spectator-friendly and deliver racing at close range. However, now it's important to intensify the series' presence in the media, especially in core markets like Germany. Here the focus should not be excessively placed on digital media. Social networks are important for addressing younger target groups, but for us widespread television coverage continues to matter as well.

Mattias Ekström has ended his DTM career and in 2018 will only be racing in rallycross. What motivated this decision?

Mattias informed us early that he wanted to contest only one series in the 2018 season. This was followed by a rather long decision-making process. I'd have already liked to know which way we were headed back in October 2017 because we were planning for him to race in the DTM. In January, we had a very long discussion at his home. Essentially, I follow the rule that if a driver doesn't want a program it's better to look for someone else. And Mattias would never do anything to which he's not 100 percent committed.

In 1980, Audi, on launching quattro permanent all-wheel drive, set a milestone in automotive history. How will this success story continue as a result of the rallycross commitment?

With quattro in rallycross we're continuing the original idea of all-wheel drive. Without all-wheel drive there's no point in competing in rallycross in the first place, so quattro is perfect. And in terms of format, a rallycross event is a lot more interesting for the spectators than a rally at which they only get to see a car drive past a particular point once. Rallycross delivers a much greater spectacle. The races are short and compact and spectators immediately see who the winner is.



quattro technology

The success story

With quattro permanent all-wheel drive Audi achieved a pioneering invention in automotive history – no other manufacturer had a fast-running, lightweight all-wheel drive in its lineup for large-scale production in 1980. By the same token, Audi has always consistently used motorsport to test and further develop new technologies for use in production vehicles.

More than eight million cars with quattro drive have left the assembly lines around the globe to date and this success story is continuing, not least due to the brand's factory involvement in the World RX with Audi Sport. The fielding of quattro drive in rallycross marks the logical continuation of the original use of all-wheel drive. Although all cars in the Supercar class, the top category in World RX, have all-wheel drive, quattro technology in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro is nearly always in contention for victory. Perfect examples of this are the two 2016 World Championship titles in the drivers' and teams' classifications. Plus, with a current tally of ten race victories, Mattias Ekström, together with Petter Solberg, is the most successful campaigner in history.

quattro technology debuted at the Geneva Motor Show in 1980 in the "Ur-quattro" (original quattro). In 1986, Audi replaced the first-generation manual center differential lock by a Torsen differential that was able to variably distribute torque, followed in 2005 by a planetary gear with asymmetrically dynamic torque distribution. Audi has continually been pursuing the further development of the self-locking center differentials. They are regarded as the benchmark in terms of traction and driving dynamics, combined with very low weight. Currently, quattro technology is available in more than 100 Audi model variants. On the Audi Q7, the Audi A4 allroad quattro, the Audi A6 allroad quattro, the Audi A8, the Audi R8 and on all S and RS models, the all-wheel drive system is standard.

Audi celebrated numerous triumphs with quattro technology in motorsport as well. Not counting the era before the Second World War including the legendary Auto Union Grand Prix race cars in 1930s, the motorsport history of AUDI AG began with the Audi quattro. The dominant victories and two manufacturers' and two drivers' titles achieved with the "Ur-quattro" in the World Rally Championship between 1982 and 1984 were an important factor in the market success of quattro drive.



After Audi had turned rally racing upside down and stormed up Pikes Peak (USA, 4.301 meters) in record time on three consecutive occasions with the Sport quattro, the brand from Ingolstadt made quattro drive presentable in circuit racing as well. To demonstrate its capabilities and to strengthen its market position in the United States at the same time, the Audi 200 quattro was put on the grid of the TransAm series in which it celebrated the title win in 1988. Seven races in total were won by the car's successor, the Audi 90 quattro IMSA-GTO, as well. With the Audi V8 quattro two titles in the DTM followed in 1990 and 1991, plus eleven national titles with the A4 in production-based Supertouring Car racing – with seven of them clinched in 1996 alone. They were followed 20 years later by the two titles for Ekström and EKS in the World RX.



Audi Sport

Vorsprung durch Motorsport

For nearly 40 years Audi Sport has stood for the successful motorsport involvement of AUDI AG. Not only the new team name of the factory-backed EKS Audi Sport rallycross commitment features the label with the red rhombus, but the Ingolstadt-based brand sells the sportiest Audi models and accessories under Audi Sport as well.

The initial motorsport activities in the late 1970s of the brand that was still young at the time were run under the name of Audi Motorsport. When Audi entered the World Rally Championship the motorsport department, in 1980, was renamed Audi Sport and the first Audi Sport logo created.

Even at that time, factory-backed motorsport at Audi was part of Technical Development (TE). This close connection guarantees the technology transfer between motorsport and production which has traditionally been a decisive reason for Audi to be active in motorsport at the highest level.

The Competence Center Motorsport in Neuburg an der Donau has been the headquarters of the Audi motorsport department since August 2014. In the modern complex, Audi engineers are working on the development of the rallycross Supercar in which EKS Audi Sport competes in the World RX.

In addition to the World RX, Audi's motorsport program currently consists of Formula E, the DTM and customer motorsport which is based in Neuburg too. At the moment, Audi Sport customer racing is offering customers GT3 and GT4 versions of the Audi R8 LMS and the Audi RS 3 LMS TCR touring car.

Audi also markets the production Audi R8 and the Audi RS models under the brand name of Audi Sport. The company's credo is "Born on the track" which illustrates where the genes of the sportiest Audi models stem from – motor racing.



Audi S1 EKS RX quattro

A small but powerful performer

The Audi S1 name brings back memories to many rally fans. The racing version of the storied road-going quattro became a legend due to its Group B races in the World Rally Championship and the triumph in the 1987 Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. This tradition continues in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro.

In the planning stage of the rallycross project in 2014, the S1 became the car of choice relatively soon. According to team principal Ekström, the subcompact car with its short wheelbase and minimal overhang is perfectly suited for the sometimes very narrow rallycross circuits. Thanks to its good traction and sophisticated suspension, it is in contention for victory on both fast and slow tracks. Aside from these factors, the start is particularly crucial in rallycross. This is when up to six cars are pitted against each other. After the start, the narrow circuits offer only limited overtaking opportunities.

For the 2018 season EKS Audi Sport has prepared two all-new Audi S1 EKS RX quattro cars. Previously, the team had decided that the first four prototypes no longer satisfied the requirements profile for tackling the battle for the drivers' and teams' world championships. With respective technical and aerodynamic innovations the squad aims to outstrip the competition around Volkswagen and Peugeot again.

Under the hood of the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, a two-liter turbo engine provides the required power. The transverse inline-four unit delivers 580 hp (426 kW) and develops more than 700 Nm of torque which, in spite of its 45-mm air restrictor, makes this engine a similar brute as the one used in the old Group B monster from the 1980s, although the vehicle's weight is only 1.3 metric tons – including the driver. Hardly of any consequence in terms of weight is the fuel tank with a capacity of 20 liters – which is enough for the short racing distances.

Gears are mechanically shifted using a sequential six-speed transmission. Thanks to the unit's short gear ratio combined with its extreme ability to transmit power to the wheels and thanks to systematic lightweight design, with many parts of the body kit consisting of carbon fiber reinforced plastics, the all-wheel-drive rocket catapults the driver from 0 to 100 km/h in 2.5 seconds. Not even Formula 1 cars accomplish this in less time. By contrast, the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro achieves a relatively low top speed



of 210 km/h which is enough, though, on the World RX tracks with their short acceleration sections and straights covering a maximum of a few hundred meters.

As far as its exterior is concerned, the subcompact car from Ingolstadt features aerodynamic modifications. Large wheel arch cutouts and flared fenders catch the eye. In addition, a roll cage and massive rear wing transform the fast city car into a rallycross monster bursting with vigor. The large air scoops in the rear side windows and the roof supplying the radiator installed at the rear end with fresh air are a special characteristic. There is a good reason for this unusual arrangement. If the radiator sat at the front, gravel and mud might obstruct air supply and possibly cause the engine to overheat.

For the car's exterior design, Ekström and his team deliberately integrated elements of the legendary Audi S1 quattro from the 1980s. As a result, the fenders of the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro are "slightly sharper and more angular than those of the other rallycross cars," according to Ekström. However, the regulations are very strict in this respect. The width of the racing version may differ from the road-going car by a maximum of seven centimeters. In terms of length, the dimensions even have to be exactly identical.

Also special to rallycross are the specification tires supplied by U.S. manufacturer Cooper Tires. "We have a cut slick that's very soft. In other series, you'd call it a qualifier," says Ekström. Only eight of these tires are available to each driver on a weekend with up to six races. "Due to the soft compound and the hand-cut tread, it's possible to drive on gravel rallycross tracks nearly as fast as on tarmac," Ekström emphasizes.

In order to lose as little time as possible even in cornering the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro cockpit includes a special eye-catcher. Unlike its production counterpart, the rallycross race car has an oversized handbrake projecting upward at a steep angle and is directly installed next to the gear knob. When used, the handbrake decouples the rear wheels from the drivetrain, causing them to break traction and slide out. This makes it possible to perform drifts through the tightest turns.



Technical data

Audi S1 EKS RX quattro (2018)

As of: March 2018

Model	Audi S1 EKS RX quattro (2018)
Vehicle	
Vehicle type	World RX Supercar
Chassis	Reinforced Audi S1 body with weld-in safety cell according to FIA standard
Engine	
Engine	Gasoline R4 turbo engine, 4 valves per cylinder, 45-mm diameter air restrictor acc. to regulations
Engine management	Bosch MS 5.0
Engine lubrication	Wet sump
Cubic capacity	2,000 cc
Power output	580 HP
Torque	More than 700 Nm
Drivetrain/transmission	
Type of drive	Permanent quattro four-wheel drive, drive of rear axle can be decoupled by operating the handbrake
Clutch	3-plate CFRP clutch
Transmission	Mechanical sequential 6-speed transmission
Differential	Adjustable multi-disc differential locks on front and rear axle
Suspension/steering/brakes	
Steering	Servo-assisted rack-and-pinion steering
Suspension	MacPherson struts, front and rear, adjustable gas pressure dampers
Brakes	Hydraulic dual-circuit braking system, monoblock light alloy brake calipers, ventilated brake discs front and rear with Pagid RS brake linings, brake force distribution between front and rear infinitely adjustable by the driver
Wheels	Cast magnesium wheels from OZ Racing, front and rear: 8" x 17"
Tires	Cooper Tires 225/640-17
Weight/dimensions	
Length	3,975 mm
Width	1,840 mm
Height	1,417 mm
Minimum weight	1,300 kg
Fuel cell capacity	20 l



Driver lineup

Scandinavian duo

EKS Audi Sport is contesting the 2018 World RX with a new driver duo. Team principal Mattias Ekström continues to fill the roles of team boss and driver, and Andreas Bakkerud is a new signing. Together the Swedish-Norwegian duo is competing in two newly prepared Audi S1 EKS RX quattro cars.

The aim for 2018 has been clearly stated. This year, EKS Audi Sport intends to live up to its successes in 2016 and clinch the drivers' and teams' titles again. In 2017, Mattias Ekström finished the World Championship as runner-up and EKS took position three in the teams' classification – falling short of the standards of the ambitious Swede and his success-hungry team. Currently, Ekström's rallycross biography reflects ten race victories, making the Audi factory driver, together with two-time world champion Petter Solberg, the most successful rallycross driver in the World Championship's history.

Norwegian Andreas Bakkerud is battling for trophies and titles alongside Ekström. The 27-year-old ranks among the world's best rallycross drivers as well. He has contested all 61 rounds in World RX history, claiming 24 podium finishes and six race wins. In the 2016 season, he placed third in the drivers' championship – trailing Ekström and reigning World Champion Johan Kristoffersson. "It's a great honor for me to be driving in Mattias' team. We've had good rapport with each other for many years and I've been closely following the development of EKS. Together with the team I'd now like to make the next step in my career and be in contention for the title."

EKS Audi Sport 2018 driver lineup

- ▶ Mattias Ekström (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro #5)
- ▶ Andreas Bakkerud (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro #13)



Driver statistics

EKS Audi Sport in the World RX*

	Mattias Ekström (S)	Andreas Bakkerud (N)
First round	World RX of Norway (June 14, 2014)	World RX of Portugal (May 4, 2014)
First victory	World RX of Sweden (July 6, 2014)	World RX of Great Britain (May 25, 2014)
Events	50	61
Race wins	10	6
Podium places	22	24
Participations in finals	39	41
Qualifying victories	26	17
Total number of races (Qualifying, semi-final, finals)	281	342
Total points in drivers' championship	1021	1095
Average number of points scored per event (30 max.)	20.2	17,9

* As of: November 26, 2018



Mattias Ekström (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro #5)

Fully focused on World RX

When it comes to racing, there is only one thing that Mattias Ekström has in mind this year: winning the FIA World Rallycross Championship again. At the beginning of the year, the 2016 Champion decided to end his impressive career in the DTM and to fully focus on his World RX commitment.

On achieving success in the 2016 World Rallycross Championship, Ekström once again proved that he is one of the most universal race drivers. Between 2001 and 2017, the Swede contested 195 DTM races for Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, celebrating 23 victories and two titles (2004, 2007) in the process. With that, Ekström is the most successful Audi DTM campaigner in history. In addition, his career has seen him triumph four times in the Race of Champions, racing in the World Rally Championship and NASCAR, and celebrating overall victory in 2011 in the world's most prestigious GT3 endurance race: the Spa 24 Hours .

In 2018, he is exclusively focused on rallycross. Here Ekström is more than just a race driver. Since 2014 he has been team principal as well – a dual role he was not able to imagine for a long time. When he was a young boy his father was racing in the European Rallycross Championship, but this sport, until recently, was “too dirty” for Mattias. His opinion changed when he ran as a guest entrant in the 2013 European Rallycross Championship. Following second place on home soil in Höljes, Ekström decided to return and win. With friends, partners and longstanding companions he began to put his plan into action – and went on to crown this effort with the World Championship title in 2016. Much of what he has learned at Audi Sport and ABT is reflected in his own rallycross team.

Even after more than two decades in motor racing, Mattias Ekström continues to be hungry for success. At the same time, his family has been playing a greater part in his life in recent years – having more time for them is also the main reason why he is competing in only one series this year. He uses an Audi Q7 to drive to other commitments and for trips with his partner, Heidi, and the children. “It’s simply the best family car for me,” says the father of two.

Profile

Mattias Ekström (S)

- ▶ **Date of birth** July 14, 1978
- ▶ **Place of birth** Falun (S)
- ▶ **Residence** Munich (D)
- ▶ **Marital status** single (partner Heidi), one son (Mats), one daughter (Hanna)
- ▶ **Height/weight** 1.83 m/79 kg
- ▶ **Motorsport since** 1993 (Audi driver since 1999)
- ▶ **Hobbies** cross-country skiing, jogging, mountainbiking, skiing, tennis

Major successes

- ▶ **1996** 1st Swedish Renault 5 Cup, “Young Driver of the Year“
- ▶ **1999** 1st Swedish Touring Car Championship (Audi A4 quattro)
- ▶ **2004** 1st DTM (Audi A4 DTM), 4 victories
1st Gr. N Rally Sweden and Rally Catalunya
- ▶ **2005** 2nd DTM (Audi A4 DTM), 3 victories
1st Nations Cup Race of Champions
- ▶ **2006** 1st Race of Champions
- ▶ **2007** 1st DTM (Audi A4 DTM), 1 victory
1st Race of Champions
- ▶ **2011** 2nd DTM (Audi A4 DTM), 3 victories
1st 24 Hours of Spa (Audi R8 LMS)
- ▶ **2014** 2nd DTM (Audi RS 5 DTM), 2 victories
- ▶ **2016** 1st FIA World RX (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro), 4 victories
- ▶ **2017** 2nd DTM (Audi RS 5 DTM), 1 victory
2nd FIA World RX (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro), 4 victories
- ▶ **2018** 2nd FIA World RX (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro)

Social media

- ▶ **Facebook** facebook.com/mattiasekstrom.racing
- ▶ **Twitter** @mattiasekstroem
- ▶ **Instagram** mattiasekstromracing
- ▶ **Homepage** www.mattiasekstrom.com



Andreas Bakkerud (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro #13)

Fast and popular

Andreas Bakkerud is the new signing at EKS Audi Sport. The Norwegian is only 27 years old and brings plenty of experience to the squad.

Bakkerud ranks among the world's best rallycross drivers. In 2011 and 2012, he won the European Championship in the Super1600 class and was subsequently promoted to the Supercars category in the new World RX. Since then, he has contested all 61 rounds in World RX history, made it into the final of the fastest six contenders on 41 occasions and celebrated 24 times on podium, finishing six times at the very top. In 2016, he placed third in the drivers' championship.

The Norwegian is one of the fastest rallycross drivers – plus, one of the most popular ones. His fans flock to his home races in Norway: with fan articles featuring Bakkerud's unmistakable baby-blue signature color and his car number, "13," stylized to look like a "B." The two-time European Rallycross Champion thrills his fans off the track as well. The video productions on his YouTube channel regularly attract thousands of users and provide insights into his life.

Bakkerud is popular not least due to his open and cheerful personality. In 2013, following a fair to middling beginning of his first season of racing four-wheel drive Supercars, Bakkerud announced: "If I finish one of the remaining races on podium I'll hitchhike to the last round." In Höljes and Lohéac, Bakkerud clinched victory and kept his word. One week before the season's finale, he embarked on his journey to the Estering near Hamburg, 1,500 kilometers away from his hometown of Bergen.

It took Bakkerud five days to complete his trip. Fans followed him in social media channels at #HikeToRX. Norwegian television and numerous newspapers accompanied the race driver as well. "Once, but never again," said Bakkerud. "It was an exciting but also a very strenuous trip. I now have even greater respect for people who hitchhike."



Profile

Andreas Bakkerud

- ▶ **Date of birth** October 10, 1991
- ▶ **Place of birth** Bergen (N)
- ▶ **Residence** Bergen (N)
- ▶ **Marital status** single (partner Cathrine)
- ▶ **Height/weight** 1.80 m/72 kg
- ▶ **Motorsport since** 1999
- ▶ **Hobbies** karting, endurance training, kick-boxing, skiing

Major successes

- ▶ **2011** 1st FIA Euro RX (Super1600), 4 victories
- ▶ **2012** 1st FIA Euro RX (Super1600), 3 victories
- ▶ **2013** 4th FIA Euro RX (Supercar), 2 victories
- ▶ **2014** 5th FIA World RX (Supercar), 2 victories
- ▶ **2015** 4th FIA World RX (Supercar), 1 victory
- ▶ **2016** 3rd FIA World RX (Supercar), 3 victories
- ▶ **2017** 6th FIA World RX (Supercar)
- ▶ **2018** 3rd FIA World RX (Audi S1 EKS RX quattro)

Social Media

- ▶ **YouTube** youtube.com/abakkerud
- ▶ **Facebook** facebook.com/abakkerud
- ▶ **Twitter** [@AndreasBakkerud](https://twitter.com/AndreasBakkerud)
- ▶ **Instagram** [andreasbakkerud](https://instagram.com/andreasbakkerud)
- ▶ **Homepage** www.andreasbakkerud.no



Team EKS Audi Sport

Success story

Mattias Ekström's team, EKS, has been successfully battling for victories and titles in the World RX since 2014 – and under the new name of EKS Audi Sport since this season. How an idea of the Swede turned into a winning team.

Mattias Ekström's father, Bengt Ekström, used to race in the European Rallycross Championship in the 1980s and 1990s. For Mattias Ekström, rallycross was "too dirty" for a long time. His opinion changed while running as a guest entrant in the 2013 ERX. The Swede finished runner-up in his home round at Höljes and was enthralled by the unique atmosphere in the Swedish woods. On his way home from the race, he made initial phone calls and forged out plans for putting his idea of a rallycross team of his own into action with friends and partners. Janne Ljungberg, a companion of Ekström's during their joint days in the DTM and now Technical Director at EKS, tipped the scales. "If Janne hadn't agreed to join the rallycross project, EKS would have never become reality," says Ekström.

After less than a year of preparation, Ekström contests his first World RX round in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro on June 14, 2014. Just three weeks later, in his home round at Höljes, he actually stands on the top step of the winners' podium. 857 days following his debut, he crowns himself 2016 world champion early and only 38 days later, EKS becomes teams' world champion as well. The squad has since grown to 25 members – including the two drivers, Ekström and Andreas Bakkerud, plus mechanics, race engineers, a media team of its own and chef Jonas Landmark, who has even cooked for the Swedish Royal Family before. "I personally selected all the team members," says team boss Ekström. "That's very important to me. All of them are experts in their field. They think the way I do and know how to jointly achieve success: with passion, commitment and in a really good mood."

Thanks to factory backing from AUDI AG since the 2017 season, employees of the Audi motorsport department are now supporting Team EKS Audi Sport as well. One of them is Bastian Göttle who in 2018 is succeeding Andreas Roos as Project Leader Rallycross at Audi Motorsport. Göttle's previous career has included responsibilities in aerodynamics for "Track and Special Projects" in Audi's motorsport programs in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), the DTM and in Formula E.



The history of rallycross

From a stopgap to a resounding success

Rallycross was formed in the 1960s when British television was looking for a weather-independent motorsport discipline to fill gaps in the program – whenever a horse race would fall victim to the weather.

The rallycross concept is simple, yet revolutionary. On tarmac-gravel tracks, about one kilometer in length, up to six drivers compete with each other in four qualifying heats and a knock-out system with semi-finals and a final. The format combines wheel-to-wheel duels from circuit racing with spectacular drifts from rally racing. Daredevil maneuvers and car contact are not uncommon in these tightly scheduled races, each lasting about three minutes. Plus, the series features brute cars with up to 600 hp and acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 2.5 seconds – faster than the race cars in Formula 1.

February 4, 1967 is deemed to have marked the birth of rallycross. The first official competition was held at the Lydden Hill Race Circuit in Kent. The winner of this acclaimed premiere was future Formula 1 driver and Rally Monte Carlo winner Vic Elford who had borrowed a bright red Porsche 911. In spite, or rather because, of the numerous collisions in the races and nearly all cars having only scrap value in the end, the crowd and the TV audiences were thrilled. By the end of the 1960s up to ten million Britons would follow the races on television.

So it was only a matter of time for rallycross to successfully spread to the continent. The motorsport-mad Dutch were the first to pick up on it. At the same time, the sport saw rapid growth in interest particularly in Scandinavia. Even today, Sweden, Norway and Finland continue to be rallycross hot spots. The European Rallycross Championship marked the debut of the first Europe-wide series in 1973. The grid would at times feature obscure cars such as souped-up VW Beetles with 300-hp Porsche Carrera engines or Ford Escorts powered by BMW units from Formula 2. The cars in today's World Rallycross Championship have about twice as much horsepower. "The cars are overpowered," admits Ekström who has about 580 horsepower under the hood of his Audi S1 EKS RX quattro.

As interest kept growing, the FIA appeared on the scene in 1976, inviting entries by rallycross drivers for the FIA European Cup and tightening the regulations. This did not put a damper on enthusiasm for the series, though. Quite the opposite was true.



The late 1980s and early 1990s are still regarded as the first heyday of rallycross. Division 1 featuring two-wheel drive Group A cars was dominated by 14-time European champion Kenneth Hansen who would occasionally be fighting a gripping duel with Mattias Ekström's father, Bengt.

The top category of rallycross back then met with even greater applause. Competing in Division 2 were extremely modified four-wheel drive race cars originally homologated for Groups A or B and powered by engines delivering up to 750 horsepower. One of the dominant competitors was "Mr. Rallycross," Martin Schanche. The six-time European champion is regarded as Norway's Michael Schumacher and for years was one of the celebrated superstars in rallycross. In 1987, the Group B cars banned from the World Rally Championship began to experience their renaissance in Division 2. Race cars such as the Audi Sport quattro S1 found a new home in the European Rallycross Championship and went on to dominate the scene in the subsequent years.

Following the turbo race cars' swan song and a few modifications of the regulations in the mid-1990s, rallycross racing became a clearly less prominent topic in the media. Cost savings and a lack of professionalism in marketing caused the series to fall into a deep slumber. Only since the sports marketing agency IMG has come in, plus its upgrading from a European to a World Championship in 2014, has rallycross been experiencing its second spring.



Regulations

How the World RX works

In the FIA World Rallycross Championship, spectators hardly have a moment to take a deep breath. Up to 28 races are held on each race weekend, depending on the size of the field. The format is simpler than it appears at first glance.

At all events, the drivers determine a winner in four qualifying heats, two semi-finals and the final. Consequently, a driver will ideally contest six races on a race weekend.

Draw

The race weekend starts with a draw. Computer software determines the starting order for Qualifying 1 and allocates it to the individual races with a maximum of five starters. Positions and opponents are totally open before the start – a real lottery.

Qualifying (heats)

Five drivers, four laps, three minutes of maximum suspense – a qualifying heat in the FIA World Rallycross Championship is always based on this system. The number of races depends on the number of entries. In the Supercar class, the maximum number of starters is 25 so that a maximum of five races are possible per qualifying. Every driver has to drive the Joker Lap once per race – an alternative track configuration on which the drivers lose about two seconds.

Following the first qualifying heat, an intermediate classification consolidates the results of the maximum of 25 starters:

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ▶ 1st: 50 points | ▶ 6th: 38 points | ▶ 11th: 33 points |
| ▶ 2nd: 45 points | ▶ 7th: 37 points | ▶ 12th: 32 points |
| ▶ 3rd: 42 points | ▶ 8th: 36 points | ▶ 13th: 31 points |
| ▶ 4th: 40 points | ▶ 9th: 35 points | ▶ : |
| ▶ 5th: 39 points | ▶ 10th: 34 points | ▶ 25th: 19 points |

The ranking from the respective qualifying heat produces the starting grid for the next heat. The slowest drivers will compete against each other in the first race and the five fastest in the last race. The results are tallied after the fourth qualifying heat and the twelve best-placed drivers from the intermediate classification move into the semi-finals.

Semi-finals and final

Now the top 12 are battling for the podium positions. The key differences between these races and the qualifying heats: six drivers, six laps (including one Joker Lap) and a different starting grid. While the drivers started side by side in the qualifying heats, they now start from an offset, three-row grid. Only the top three will move into the final.

The semi-finals are directly followed by the final. Repairs are hardly possible any longer now. Again, the name of the game is: six drivers, six laps (including one Joker Lap) and maximum concentration. After that, the winner has been determined.

Points system

There are three possibilities to score points in the World RX drivers' championship. Following the heats, the 16 best-placed drivers are awarded points:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| ▶ 1st: 16 points | ▶ 7th: 10 points |
| ▶ 2nd: 15 points | ▶ 8th: 9 points |
| ▶ 3rd: 14 points | ▶ 9th: 8 points |
| ▶ 4th: 13 points | ▶ 10th: 7 points |
| ▶ 5th: 12 points | ▶ : |
| ▶ 6th: 11 points | ▶ 16th: 1 point |

The semi-finals and the final offer two more opportunities to score points:

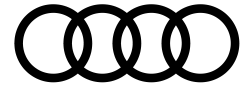
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▶ 1st semi-finals: 6 points | ▶ 1st final: 8 points |
| ▶ 2nd semi-finals: 5 points | ▶ 2nd final: 5 points |
| ▶ 3rd semi-finals: 4 points | ▶ 3rd final: 4 points |
| ▶ : | ▶ : |
| ▶ 6th semi-finals: 1 point | ▶ 6th final: 1 point |

Consequently, a driver can score a maximum of 30 points for the drivers' world championship. They are broken down as follows:

- ▶ 1st intermediate classification (top qualifier): 16 points
- ▶ 1st semi-finals: 6 points
- ▶ 1st final: 8 points

Changes to the regulations

As opposed to the previous three, only two engines are permitted per driver throughout the season this year. The number of turbochargers allowed to be used during the course of one season has been reduced as well, from six to four.



Adjustments have also been made with respect to the tires in order to save costs. From 2018 on, the teams are no longer allowed to use their own, non-registered tires in free practice and warm-up sessions. Now twelve new tires per car are available in each of the first two races of a season. From the third race on, the teams may register eight new and four used tires.

In addition, in 2018, the gear ratios may not be changed again throughout the season. In the past, the teams were allowed to use varying ratios. The utilization of different rear wings is no longer permitted in the future either. The brakes must be of the same specification throughout the season as well.



Calendar

Twelve events on three continents

The 2018 FIA World Rallycross Championship promises suspense galore once again. Up to 25 drivers are battling for victories at twelve events on three continents. Silverstone (GB) and Austin (USA) are two new venues on the calendar.

Mattias Ekström and his team, EKS Audi Sport, are taking on fierce competition once more in the FIA World RX. This season, the two EKS campaigners are joined on the grid again by up to 23 other drivers. “Volkswagen and Peugeot have no doubt done their homework, and a few privateer teams are probably going to try to make life difficult for us too,” says Ekström.

A total of twelve rounds are scheduled this year. Fans are eagerly awaiting the two new events at Silverstone (United Kingdom) and Austin (United States). Aside from the round in the United States, the World RX will visit two other venues outside of Europe: Trois-Rivières (Canada) and Cape Town (South Africa).

2018 World RX calendar

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ▶ April 14-15 | World RX of Catalunya, Barcelona (E) |
| ▶ April 28-29 | World RX of Portugal, Montalegre (P) |
| ▶ May 12-13 | World RX of Belgium, Mettet (B) |
| ▶ May 26-27 | World RX of Great Britain, Silverstone (GB) |
| ▶ June 9-10 | World RX of Norway, Hell (N) |
| ▶ June 30-July 1 | World RX of Sweden, Höljes (S) |
| ▶ August 4-5 | World RX of Canada, Trois-Rivières (CDN) |
| ▶ September 1-2 | World RX of France, Lohéac (F) |
| ▶ September 15-16 | World RX of Latvia, Riga (LV) |
| ▶ September 29-30 | World RX of USA, Austin (USA) |
| ▶ October 13-14 | World RX of Germany, Esterling (D) |
| ▶ November 24-25 | World RX of South Africa, Cape Town (ZA) |

Round 1

World RX of Catalunya, Barcelona (E)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: April 14–15, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, 25 km north of Barcelona
- ▶ Track length: 1.135 km (Joker Lap: 1,235 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60.4 % tarmac, 39.6 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 7 left, 4 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 30 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 171 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Mattias Ekström (S), 43.379s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 94.03 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 4m 36.568s

Race facts

Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya is the venue of the World RX season opener. The track near the Spanish metropolis is one of the few on the calendar with very fast turns on tarmac. This layout very much suits circuit racing expert Mattias Ekström. Into a lap, which is driven counter-clockwise, there are some flat-out sections as well, a large jump and a tricky hairpin turn in which the fans frequently get to see spectacular overtaking maneuvers. This year there will be new positions for the starting grid and the finish line.

2018 flashback

On contesting his first event for EKS Audi Sport in the FIA World Rallycross Championship, Andreas Bakkerud instantly achieved a podium result. In the turbulent season opener at Barcelona (Spain), the Norwegian took third place. His teammate, Mattias Ekström, was classified in sixth position following a sporting penalty. In front of 30,000 spectators, Ekström in the racing debut of the second-generation Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, had crossed the finish line in a spectacular final in first place beating title defender Johan Kristoffersson in a Volkswagen by a narrow margin. Yet the Swede was deprived of his third consecutive victory at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya after 2016 and 2017. In the evening, Ekström was relegated from first to sixth position because he allegedly bumped Petter Solberg's Volkswagen off track on the way to Turn 1.

Round 2

World RX of Portugal, Montalegre (P)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: April 28–29, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuito Internacional de Montalegre, 150 km northeast of Porto
- ▶ Track length: 1.010 km (Joker Lap: 1.130 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 5 left, 7 right
- ▶ Longest jump: –
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 168 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 38.064s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 96.19 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 4m16.859s

Race facts

Although the small town of Montalegre is home to only 1,800 inhabitants the Portuguese with their enthusiasm for motorsport flock to the track that is situated about 1,000 meters above sea level, celebrating a colorful rallycross festival every year in the small town near the Spanish border. The circuit is tricky. At first glance, the layout with its long start-finish straight promises only a few challenges but the devil is in the detail. The Joker section at the end of the straight offers hardly any grip. In the subsequent weave of turns, the extremely high curbs do not forgive any mistake.

2018 flashback

Sun, rain and even snow in the end: totally crazy April weather in round two of the FIA World Rallycross Championship (World RX) and a roller coaster ride for EKS Audi Sport. After positions one and three in qualifying, expectations of the two Audi campaigners, Andreas Bakkerud and Mattias Ekström, in Portugal had been higher than positions four and seven.

“It again showed how close victory and defeat are together in rallycross,” said Ekström, who was half a second short of making it into the final. “Following the qualifying heats, things looked promising but then, after turn one of our semi-finals, really bad. Due to the impact from behind I simply lost too much time even though I tried everything afterwards. The end was disappointing. But we again showed that we have a fast car.”



Round 3

World RX of Belgium, Mettet (B)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: May 12–13, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuit Jules Tacheny, 80 km southeast of Brussels
- ▶ Track length: 1.031 km (Joker Lap: 1.102 km)
- ▶ Surface: 61 % tarmac, 39 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 6 left, 6 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 23 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 170 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Timmy Hansen (S), 38.375s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 97.48 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Sébastien Loeb (F), 4m 05.108s

Race facts

Circuit Jules Tacheny in Mettet is well-known to EKS Audi Sport, not only because this is where the team has competed in four previous World RX rounds. The squad also frequently books the track 80 kilometers southeast of Brussels for tests. Its layout clearly differs from other tracks – posing high technical challenges with a number of zig-zag turns and significant vertical differences. On top of that, there is a jump into the valley that cannot be seen before the crest and that requires as much courage as the narrow first turn. Many hopes for top positions have been buried there in the tire wall.

2018 flashback

EKS Audi Sport in round three of the FIA World Rallycross Championship (World RX) in Belgium experienced some turbulent races with ups and downs. Mattias Ekström, who was leading the intermediate classification after qualifying at the challenging Circuit Jules Tacheny in the 580-hp Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, finished fourth, just barely missing the podium. His teammate, Andreas Bakkerud, on delivering a strong fight made it into the final as well, placing sixth.

Round 4

World RX of Great Britain, Silverstone (GB)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: May 26–27, 2018
- ▶ Track: Silverstone Circuit, 24 km south of Northampton
- ▶ Track length: 0.972 km
- ▶ Surface: 40 % tarmac, 60 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 3 left, 7 right
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 162 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Timmy Hansen (S), 37.872s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 92.08 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 4m 00.899s

Race facts

Silverstone Circuit is hosting a World RX round this year for the first time. The track on which the Formula 1 World Championship held its inaugural race on May 13, 1950 succeeds the “Home of Rallycross” at Lydden Hill.

2018 flashback

Huge celebrations in Silverstone (Great Britain): in his fourth event for EKS Audi Sport in the FIA World Rallycross Championship (World RX), Andreas Bakkerud made the step onto the winners’ podium for the first time after finishing second. Mattias Ekström completed the strong showing of the powerful 580 hp Audi S1 EKS RX quattro with fourth place.

The first outing for the World Rallycross Championship on the traditional race track in Silverstone was a complete success. Thousands of spectators celebrated for three long days the Speedmachine festival, at which they enjoyed incredibly exciting motorsport. As was the case in the opening three World Championship rounds, Audi, Peugeot and Volkswagen battled on a totally equal footing on the new race track. For the third time this year, both EKS Audi Sport drivers qualified for the final featuring the best six. Starting alongside each other on the second row, Bakkerud held a better line in turn one and in doing so secured second place behind Johan Kristoffersson in the Volkswagen. The Norwegian missed out on victory by a mere 0.859 seconds.

Ekström initially lay immediately behind the leading duo. After the joker lap, the Swede was passed by Sébastien Loeb and ultimately had to settle for fourth place.

Round 5

World RX of Norway, Hell (N)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: June 9–10, 2018
- ▶ Track: Lånkebanen Hell, 30 km northeast of Trondheim
- ▶ Track length: 1.019 km (Joker Lap: 1.110 km)
- ▶ Surface: 63 % tarmac, 37 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 3 left, 6 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 16 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 156 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Timur Timerzyanov (RUS), 37.731s (2016)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 97.22 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 3m 54.906s

Race facts

Hell plays an important part in the history of EKS Audi Sport. This is where the rallycross adventure started on June 14, 2014 for Mattias Ekström's team. The challenging roller coaster track near Trondheim is not necessarily one of Ekström's favorite ones. Quite the opposite is true for his Norwegian teammate Andreas Bakkerud. At Hell, he competes in front of his enthusiastic fans. In addition, in 2016, he was the first driver in World RX history to pull off a perfect weekend there on which he won all of his six races and scored the maximum number of points.

2018 flashback

Another podium finish for EKS Audi Sport in the FIA World Rallycross Championship. In Norway, Mattias Ekström in the 580-hp Audi S1 EKS RX quattro celebrated second place and his first podium finish this season. In front of some 24,000 enthusiastic spectators, the two Audi drivers from Team EKS Audi Sport experienced a changeable weekend. Following the first two qualifying sessions on Saturday, Ekström and Bakkerud placed fourth and seventh in the intermediate classification. In the third qualifying on Sunday, Ekström received a five-second penalty due to a collision with Petter Solberg. In Q4, his car stopped on the starting line due to a defect. Even so, in tenth position overall, Ekström made it into the semi-finals together with Andreas Bakkerud. Both Audi drivers clinched second place in their semi-finals. As a result, for the fourth time this year, both drivers from EKS Audi Sport qualified for the final of the top six. Mattias Ekström, who had started alongside Bakkerud from the second row, pulled off with a dream start and after six laps only had to admit defeat to winner Johan Kristoffersson by 0.788 seconds.



Round 6

World RX of Sweden, Höljes (S)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: June 30–July 1, 2018
- ▶ Track: Höljes Motorstadion, 200 km north of Karlstad (S)
- ▶ Track length: 1.210 km (Joker Lap: 1.250 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 6 left, 5 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 38 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 167 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Petter Solberg (N), 41.110s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 105.53 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 4m 14.969

Race facts

Höljes is the “wildest” event of the year. In the midst of the woods in central Sweden, more than 40,000 fans come together for a huge party with music, barbecue and, of course, rallycross. For the Swedish EKS Audi Sport team its round on home soil is a special one. At the Höljes Motorstadion, EKS has celebrated two victories including the first one in the team’s history, in 2014. The track confronts the drivers with challenges from start to finish. When braking into turn 1, the cars have to cross the crest of a small hill that lends maximum space to three of them. This section is followed by the normal route with a small jump or, alternatively, the slower Joker section. Subsequently, in the Motodrom, heated position duels with smoking tires frequently ensue before the drivers accelerate their Supercars to about 180 km/h and tackle the most spectacular jump of the year on their way to the finish.

2018 flashback

On clinching second place on the “Magic Weekend” in Höljes, Sweden, Audi driver Andreas Bakkerud improved from fourth to second position again in the World RX. With a strong home round EKS Audi Sport bumped the Peugeot factory team from position two in the teams’ standings. 51,600 spectators made for a record turnout and a festival atmosphere at the World RX season’s pinnacle event. Particularly active yet again were Andreas Bakkerud’s fans, who flocked to Höljes and fired up the crowd with their chants. The cheers were especially loud when their hero on the last lap of the final clinched second place. For the Norwegian, this marked an amazing fifth consecutive Supercar podium at Höljes. After a collision with Timmy Hansen, Mattias Ekström was handed a penalty retroactively relegating him from third to sixth place.



Round 7

World RX of Canada, Trois-Rivières (CDN)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: August 4–5, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuit Trois-Rivières, 125 km northeast of Montreal
- ▶ Track length: 1.370 km (Joker Lap: 1.455 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 4 left, 7 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 20 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 202 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Petter Solberg (N), 46.959s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 104.62 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 5m 00.190s

Race facts

Trois-Rivières, Canada, is hosting the season's first round outside of Europe. As in the years before, the event is part of the GP3R Motorsport Festival. The street circuit, which includes a course for horse racing, has seen many drivers duel each other in wild battles. The track features the longest straight on the World RX calendar. The section leads into a super-fast right-hand turn that can be driven nearly flat-out. The track noticeably narrows only in front of turn 2 where the drivers have to slam on the brakes for the first time. Two jumps and many other very tight sections that stress the hardware make high demands on the drivers as well as on the mechanics in the temporary pit facilities – particularly in terms of setting up the cars.

2018 flashback

During the season's first overseas race both Mattias Ekström and his teammate, Andreas Bakkerud, shone with strong starts and fast times. Ekström in the 580-hp Audi S1 EKS RX quattro featuring improvements to the suspension and the engine occupied second place overall at the end of day one. After a racing incident between Ekström's Audi and Sébastien Loeb's Peugeot, the Swede was unable to finish Q3. With an impressive second place in the semi-finals, Ekström clinched his ticket for the final, but missed the podium there by just 1.2 seconds. From third on the grid, Andreas Bakkerud showed a rocket start in the second semi-final and advanced to the front of the field. "Unfortunately, Sébastien Loeb touched the rear of my car which resulted in damage to a suspension component," the Norwegian reported. Even so, he did not give up and in his Audi impressively fought his way across the finish line in fourth position but barely missed making it into the final.



Round 8

World RX of France, Lohéac (F)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: September 1–2, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuit de Lohéac, 30 km south of Rennes
- ▶ Track length: 1.070 km (Joker Lap: 1.090 km)
- ▶ Surface: 33 % tarmac, 67 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 2 left, 5 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 22 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 168 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 35.994s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 106.72 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 3m 44.787s

Race facts

There is no other event in the World RX that attracts more spectators than the round at Lohéac. In recent years, the natural stands were jam-packed with some 75,000 spectators. The impressive backdrop and knowledgeable audience in the “rallycross country of France” provide the drivers with an extra motivation boost. The track is basically a classic circuit because the gravel is very hard. It is made up almost exclusively of fast sections with a number of good overtaking opportunities. Spectacular are the long parallel run on the normal route and the Joker Lap where the drivers battle for positions while a large concrete wall temporarily separates the opponents from each other.

2018 flashback

A thrilling race weekend with a decision on the final meters: In round eight of the FIA World Rallycross Championship season, Andreas Bakkerud and Mattias Ekström just barely missed scoring the first victory this season for EKS Audi Sport, but regained second place in the teams’ classification in front of 80,000 enthusiastic fans.

Both Audi drivers started to the final from the front row. Andreas Bakkerud took the lead in front of Ekström. The Audi drivers defended their top two positions up until the final lap. However, on returning from the Joker lap, Bakkerud had to get in line between Johan Kristoffersson and Petter Solberg (both Volkswagen) and missed victory by a mere 0.34 seconds. Mattias Ekström took position four.

Round 9

World RX of Latvia, Riga (LV)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: September 15–16, 2018
- ▶ Track: Bīķernieki Sports Complex, 10 km east of Riga
- ▶ Track length: 1.295 km (Joker Lap: 1.355 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 8 left, 4 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 30 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 146 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 48.081s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 95.35 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2017: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 5m 01.530s

Race facts

The round at Riga stands for thrilling races and perfect organization. In 2016 and 2017, the organizers received recognition for the best World RX event. The track is part of the Bīķernieki Sports Complex and was built from scratch for the inaugural event in 2016. The surface of the gravel sections is similarly hard as the one at Lohéac and the two jumps are neatly incorporated in the layout, resulting in a mix of fast tarmac sections and treacherous turns on both surfaces. The parallel routing of the normal track and the Joker section, which run completely side by side, each featuring a jump, is unique.

2018 flashback

EKS Audi Sport celebrate a podium finish for the sixth time in the current World RX season: in Riga, Mattias Ekström in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro finished second, only 2.3 seconds behind the winner and championship leader Johan Kristoffersson (Volkswagen). The road for Mattias Ekström to the silver trophy went very smoothly: by being placed third in the intermediate results, the Swede qualified for the semi-final where he clinched a place in the final after finishing second behind Kristoffersson. In the crucial race for the best six, Ekström was again only beaten by his Swedish countryman and thus claimed the sixth podium finish for EKS Audi Sport in the 2018 season. Andreas Bakkerud and DTM star Nico Müller, who contested his first wild card race of the season in Latvia, also qualified for the semi-finals with the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro. However, they were both out of luck: in a collision at the start, Bakkerud's Audi was pushed into that of Müller. As a consequence, both drivers missed making the cut for the final.



Round 10

World RX of USA, Austin (USA)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: September 29–30, 2018
- ▶ Track: Circuit of the Americas (COTA), 22 km southeast of Austin
- ▶ Track length: 0.812 km
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 3 left, 6 right
- ▶ Lap record: Sébastien Loeb (F), 33.517s (2018)
- ▶ Winner in 2017: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 3m 31.118s

Race facts

In addition to the new event at Silverstone, the World RX is celebrating another premiere this year. For the first time in the racing series' history a round will be held in the United States. The venue will be the Circuit of the Americas (COTA) on which the United States Grand Prix in the Formula 1 World Championship has been held since 2012 as well as races of the World Motorcycle Championship since 2013. The five-year agreement with the World Rallycross Championship, similar to the round at Silverstone, provides for a festival weekend featuring spectacular supporting races and non-track events. The track is located in the stadium area of the Formula 1 circuit between turns 12 and 15 and comes up with a massive jump. Even before the inaugural event of the World RX, the COTA can look back on a past in rallycross racing. In 2014, a race of the Global Rallycross Championship (GRC) was held there as part of the X Games which three-time GRC Champion Scott Speed won.

2018 flashback

During the first outing for the World RX in the USA, EKS Audi Sport scored its seventh top 3 result of the season. With temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, both drivers in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro reached the final for the best six. The Norwegian Andreas Bakkerud took third overall while team mate Mattias Ekström finished the final in fifth place after contact with an opponent. Both EKS Audi Sport drivers had made their way into the final with strong performances in the preliminary races: team owner Mattias Ekström held second in the intermediate standings after the first day, and won third qualifying as well as the semi-final on Sunday. With consistently good times in the qualifying sessions and a third place in the semi-final, Andreas Bakkerud also made the final. In the decisive race for the best six, the Norwegian drove a flawless race in the hot and humid temperatures of over 30 degrees to finish third.

Round 11

World RX of Germany, Estering (D)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: October 13–14, 2018
- ▶ Track: Estering in Buxtehude, 35 km southwest of Hamburg
- ▶ Track length: 0.925 km (Joker Lap: 0.890 km)
- ▶ Surface: 60 % tarmac, 40 % gravel
- ▶ Turns: 3 left, 6 right
- ▶ Longest jump: –
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 174 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 34.357s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 97.29 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 3m 33.568s

Race facts

The Estering brings back many fond memories to Mattias Ekström. This is where, in 2016, the Swede clinched the drivers' world championship title early. In 2017, he won the race. The tradition-steeped track near Hamburg features one of the most spectacular turns in the motorsport circus. The tight turn 1 on the short circuit that merely measures 952 meters in length separates the men from the boys and keeps delivering impressive maneuvers. Further into the lap, the track is marked by flat-out sections in which overtaking is practically impossible unless the competition makes mistakes. All the more important are a perfect start and the right tactics in turn 1 and a good Joker Lap strategy.

2018 flashback

In the World RX season's penultimate round at the Estering, Mattias Ekström and Andreas Bakkerud in positions two and three celebrated the first two podium finishes in a single event for EKS Audi Sport in the 2018 season. Ekström in the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro only had to admit defeat to World Champion Johan Kristoffersson by 1.849 seconds. In the preliminary heats, the two EKS Audi Sport drivers had previously created a good base for the final races: On Sunday, Mattias Ekström won the third qualifying session and placed fourth in the intermediate classification. As a result, Bakkerud and Ekström started to the semi-finals from the front row. In the turbulent action both showed strong starts, maintained the lead and celebrated a one-two result. In the final, Andreas Bakkerud and Mattias Ekström were in positions two and four when the race was stopped due to an accident. Following the restart, Mattias Ekström clinched second place ahead of Bakkerud.

Round 12

World RX of South Africa, Cape Town (ZA)

Facts and figures

- ▶ Date: November 24–25, 2018
- ▶ Track: Killarney International Raceway, 10 km north of Cape Town
- ▶ Track length: 1.067 km
- ▶ Surface: 60% tarmac, 40% gravel
- ▶ Turns: 3 left, 5 right
- ▶ Longest jump: approx. 28 m
- ▶ Top speed: approx. 156 km/h
- ▶ Lap record: Timmy Hansen (S), 39.778s (2018)
- ▶ Average speed: approx. 95.87 km/h
- ▶ Winner in 2018: Johan Kristoffersson (S), 4m 12.787s

Race facts

The World RX season's finale will again be held at the foot of the impressive Table Mountain in Cape Town. The track built from scratch in 2016 impressed in every respect on hosting its inaugural event last year. The drivers praised the fluid layout with a large jump and a spectacular convergence of the normal circuit and the Joker Lap shortly before the finish line. The long first right-hand bend that turns into a narrow left-hand corner on gravel delivered numerous spectacular duels. The first gravel section and another straight are followed by a weave of turns and, only in the final sector, by the longer Joker route that is driven completely on gravel.

2018 flashback

In a captivating finale in South Africa, Audi driver Mattias Ekström secured once again the runner-up title in the World RX at the wheel of the Audi S1 EKS RX quattro. The Swede also finished the final race of the season in Cape Town in second place behind World Champion Johan Kristoffersson (Volkswagen). Despite starting the finale for the best six from the back row in his Audi S1 EKS RX quattro, Ekström still fought his way up second place. During his stirring drive he overtook nine-time Rally World Champion Sébastien Loeb in a Peugeot on the opening lap. Shortly after, he also caught and passed two-time Rallycross World Champion in a Volkswagen. After the four qualification races, Bakkerud was one place in front of Ekström and reduced the deficit to his team boss from four to three points. In the semi-final, the Norwegian was forced to park his Audi S1 EKS RX quattro early following a collision. He nevertheless clinched third place in the drivers' world championship and in doing so completed the double podium for EKS Audi Sport in the World Championship.



Statistics

World RX facts and figures*

General

- ▶ **5** Seasons
- ▶ **61** World RX rounds
- ▶ **20** tracks

Driver World Champions

- ▶ **2018** Johan Kristoffersson (S)
- ▶ **2017** Johan Kristoffersson (S)
- ▶ **2016** **Mattias Ekström (S)**
- ▶ **2015** Petter Solberg (N)
- ▶ **2014** Petter Solberg (N)

Team World Champions

- ▶ **2018** PSRX Volkswagen Sweden
- ▶ **2017** PSRX Volkswagen Sweden
- ▶ **2016** **EKS**
- ▶ **2015** Team Peugeot Hansen
- ▶ **2014** Olsbergs MSE

Largest number of races

- ▶ **61** **Andreas Bakkerud (N)**
Timmy Hansen (S)
Petter Solberg (N)
Timur Timerzyanov (RUS)

Largest number of final appearances

- ▶ **47** Petter Solberg (N)
- ▶ **42** Timmy Hansen (S)
- ▶ **41** **Andreas Bakkerud (N)**
- ▶ **40** Johan Kristoffersson (S)
- ▶ **39** **Mattias Ekström (S)**

Largest number of podium finishes

- ▶ **30** Petter Solberg (N)
- ▶ **29** Johan Kristoffersson (S)
- ▶ **24** **Andreas Bakkerud (N)**
Timmy Hansen (S)
- ▶ **22** **Mattias Ekström (S)**

Largest number of race wins (drivers)

- ▶ **20** Johan Kristoffersson (S)
- ▶ **10** **Mattias Ekström (S)**
Petter Solberg (N)
- ▶ **6** **Andreas Bakkerud (N)**
- ▶ **5** Timmy Hansen (S)

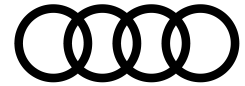
Largest number of race wins (brands)

- ▶ **24** Volkswagen
- ▶ **11** **Audi**
- ▶ **9** Citroën
Peugeot
- ▶ **8** Ford

Largest number of race wins (nation)

- ▶ **37** Sweden
- ▶ **16** Norway
- ▶ **4** France
- ▶ **2** Finland
- ▶ **1** Latvia
USA

* As of: November 26, 2018



Contacts

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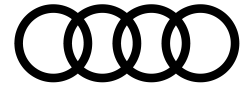
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Fuel consumption of the models named above

Audi A4 allroad quattro

Combined fuel consumption in l/100 km: 6.7–4.9 **

Combined CO₂ emissions in g/km: 154–127 **

Audi A6 allroad quattro

Combined fuel consumption in l/100 km: 6.5–5.6 **

Combined CO₂ emissions in g/km: 172–149 **

** Depending on tire/wheel set used and engine/transmission version