



FORD FIESTA RALLYCROSS CARS TO MAKE U.S. DEBUT AT PIKE'S PEAK INTERNATIONAL HILL CLIMB

- Fiesta to make its U.S. motorsport debut as the Olsbergs Motor Sport Evolution race team brings two Fiesta Rallycross cars for competition at Pike's Peak International Hill Climb in July.
- High-profile event for Fiesta helps brand grow awareness among U.S. racing and performance enthusiasts.

Dearborn (Michigan), May 28 – The new Ford Fiesta may not be hitting the streets of America officially until next year, but high-performance motorsport examples of the car will make their U.S. racing debut this summer when the Olsberg Motor Sport Evolution team from Sweden, managed by Andreas Eriksson, brings two new Fiesta Rallycross cars to compete in the annual Pike's Peak International Hill Climb in Colorado on July 19.

“The new Fiesta is an engaging, fun to drive car that is off to a very successful start in Europe and Asia,” said Jim Farley, Group Vice President, Ford Global Marketing and Communications. “Thanks to Andreas Eriksson, we're able to introduce the Fiesta to racing fans in the U.S. ahead of its launch in 2010.”

The Pike's Peak International Hill Climb dates back to 1916, and is the second oldest motor sports event in America, taking its name from the famous mountain peak that towers above Colorado Springs in the Rocky Mountains and is often referred to as 'The Race to the Clouds'. Ford cars have been at Pike's Peak since the very first race in 1916, when four Ford-powered cars competed. In 1922, Ford scored its first victory when Noel Bullock took his 179ci, OHV, 50 hp Ford Special, nicknamed “Tin Lizzy” by the other competitors, to a surprise victory in the time of 19:50.9.

The two Fiestas will be driven by Eriksson and rally legend Marcus Grönholm in the 'Unlimited Class' at Pike's Peak, in an attempt to be the first team to break the 10-minute mark over the 12.4-mile, 156-turn pavement and gravel course.

Andreas Eriksson, 35, is a four-time Swedish rally champion, with multiple Rallycross victories, and Marcus Grönholm, 41, is one of World Rallying's greatest drivers, with two world championships and 30 WRC victories on his resume.

"We're pleased to have a top independent team like Olsbergs MSE coming to the U.S. with their Fiesta Rallycross cars to take on the challenge of Pike's Peak," said Brian Wolfe, director, Ford North America Motorsports. "This will be a great chance for enthusiasts here to see in this unique setting what a lot of the rest of the world is already talking about – that the Fiesta is a great road car and a great race car."

Ford Motor Company's director of Global Motorsport Business Development, Jost Capito, said: "The Pike's Peak event is another step forward for the new Ford Fiesta as a core vehicle in Ford's future global motorsport aspirations. We're looking forward to seeing Andreas and Marcus in action on this unique event."

After finishing second in the Swedish championship last year, Olsberg's MSE team debuted its new Fiesta Rallycross car for this season's Swedish and European Rallycross championships, and it scored its first victory in just its second European championship event in Portugal this past month.

The Olsbergs MSE Fiesta Rallycross car is based on both the Fiesta hatchback model road cars. The all-wheel-drive Fiestas are powered by a 2.0-liter Duratec Ford engine capable of more than 800 horsepower.

The Fiesta Rallycross car's suspension system is the result of collaboration between Olsbergs Motor Sport Evolution, Öhlins and Ford of Europe's Team RS engineers, who are responsible for Ford's FIA World Rally Championship program.

“We worked night and day all winter to get the Fiesta ready on time for the European championships, and it was great to see it score a hard-earned victory in Portugal at the start of May,” said Eriksson. “We are excited to be bringing the car to Pike’s Peak and to be able to see what it can do in such a unique competition. It’s a legendary event, and we’ve already been there to take a look at the challenge we will face. I’m convinced we’ll be a top contender to break the 10-minute mark and give the Fiesta a proper racing debut in the U.S.”

Ford Racing North America, although not directly involved in the project, will assist the team with logistical support while it is in America.

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