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Page 1 of 2



## ŠKODA New Zealand Rally Team claim second in New Zealand Rally Championship

- › Strong consistent results throughout the season were key to the points tally in the first year of contesting the ŠKODA FABIA R5 Rally car.
- › Hunt secured the championship despite an off during SS7 of Round 5 in the Championship but bounced back in Round 6 to secure second position in the NZRC

**Auckland, New Zealand, 10 October 2022 - ŠKODA New Zealand Rally team claim second in New Zealand Rally Championship**

The ŠKODA New Zealand Rally Team have secured second place in the New Zealand Rally Championship with Ben Hunt and co-driver Tony Rawstorn piloting the ŠKODA FABIA R5 Rally car at the weekend's Rally of New Zealand.

Returning to New Zealand's shores for the first time in a decade, Rally New Zealand threw treacherous conditions at drivers with wet and muddy conditions. For Hunt and Rawstorn the focus was, as it has been all season, consistency and securing the best possible position in the domestic Championship.

"Conditions on the Whaanga Coast were really slippery! It can be tricky to find speed in those conditions especially as we hadn't raced the new car in anything quite like this, but the ŠKODA FABIA R5 felt great. The roads were constantly changing so we just had to be patient, it was a balancing act between pushing hard when you could and keeping lines as tight and smooth as possible." Said Hunt.





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Page 2 of 2

Despite the slippery conditions Ben and Tony maintained great pace on Friday consistently posting third fastest stage times and keeping pressure on fellow ŠKODA FABIA R5 driver and professional Supercar Champion, Shane van Gisbergen.

An off-road excursion however on the final stage of the day, SS7, retired them from Round 5 of the championship and the team worked hard to repair the damage for Round 6 on Saturday. The ŠKODA New Zealand Rally Team bounced back to take fourth place in Round 6 and secure second place in the championship.

"The team was awesome to get the car turned around in time for Saturday, we just kept focus on our championship position, and it was great to secure second in our first year with the new car. Competition has been fierce this year and the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 has been awesome, we've learned a lot in our debut season with ŠKODA and I can't thank the team and my amazing sponsors enough. I'm really excited for next season; we'll take a lot of data into it and be even faster." Said Hunt.