

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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Rally Argentina: Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson take the lead on day one in their ŠKODA FABIA R5

- › Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson drive a clear best time in their ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the WRC 2 in front of ten thousand enthusiastic fans in Cordoba
- › Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek is confident: “We’re well prepared for this rally.”
- › Pontus Tidemand stresses: “The stages are tough on man and machine.”
- › Quantity and quality: Three ŠKODA FABIA R5s in the top three places – ŠKODA is by far the strongest brand in the WRC 2

Cordoba/Argentina, 28 April 2017 – Ten thousand spectators celebrated the first clear best time by Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5) in the special show stage in the centre of Cordoba, marking the start of the Rally Argentina. The Swedes were already the fastest in the shake down on Thursday morning. However, the rally gets going for real on Friday, with the first special stage on around 20 kilometres of Argentine gravel.

“This is my first time driving at the Rally Argentina. It’s one of the toughest and most demanding events in the World Rally Championship. You have to find the right pace to get the car through the stages in one piece,” says Pontus Tidemand. Together with co-driver Jonas Andersson, the ŠKODA works driver is placing his faith in the ŠKODA FABIA R5 that he already drove to victory in the Rally Mexico. If Tidemand secures a top result in Argentina, he’s poised to take over the lead in the World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

“We’re proud to be the strongest brand in the WRC 2 field here in Argentina with a total of six ŠKODA FABIA R5. It’s a clear indication that our strategy of demonstrating the attractiveness and competitiveness of our rally car with the presence of our works team is definitely working,” says ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek with obvious pleasure.

Interim standings Rally Argentina (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE) ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:59,2 min.
2. Guerra/Cué (MEX/ESP), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2,0 sec.
3. Ptasek/Szepaniak (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2,9 sec.
4. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +4,8 sec.
5. Alonso/Mercadal (ARTG/ARG, ŠKODA FABIA R5, +7,8 sec.
6. Saba Rodriguez/Mussano (PRY/ARG), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +8,8 sec.



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The 2017 calendar for the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	19.01.–22.01.2017
Rally Sweden	09.02.–12.02.2017
Rally Mexico	09.03.–12.03.2017
Rally France	06.04.–09.04.2017
Rally Argentina	27.04.–30.04.2017
Rally Portugal	18.05.–21.05.2017
Rally Italy	08.06.–11.06.2017
Rally Poland	29.06.–02.07.2017
Rally Finland	27.07.–30.07.2017
Rally Germany	17.08.–20.08.2017
Rally Spain	05.10.–08.10.2017
Rally Great Britain	26.10.–29.10.2017
Rally Australia	16.11.–19.11.2017

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ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2017

Leading the Rally Argentina after a best time in the opening stage: Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5).

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2017

Well prepared as they start one of the most demanding rounds of the World Rally Championship: Pontus Tidemand (left) and co-driver Jonas Andersson.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been successful on the motorsport scene since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include winning the title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for the first time in 2016, numerous title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Monte Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

2016 was one of the most successful years in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. In the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker for the first time. In total, ten of the 2016 season's races in the World Rally Championship were won by a ŠKODA FABIA R5. ŠKODA drivers Gustavo Saba (PRY) and Gaurav Gill (IND) also won the continental championships in South America and the Asia-Pacific region at the wheel of the successful ŠKODA FABIA R5. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) was unbeatable in the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), while a further ten national titles also went the way of ŠKODA drivers.

The ŠKODA FABIA R5, a high-tech 4x4, was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 is successfully continuing the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA SUPER 2000, won 50 national and international titles around the world. In 2017, works duos Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) and Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) will contest selected races in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Kopecký/Dresler will also compete in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), where they will be looking to claim a third title in a row.

ŠKODA AUTO

- › is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- › currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- › in 2016 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs over 30,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

