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Rally Portugal: Double lead for ŠKODA FABIA R5 with Andreas Mikkelsen and Pontus Tidemand

- › Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger-Synnevaag leading Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson
- › Fast tyre change after a puncture brought ŠKODA driver Tidemand into second position
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “ŠKODA FABIA R5 fast and reliable on the tough gravel roads of Rally Portugal”
- › Sunday leg features four more stages – battle for second in WRC 2 continues

Matosinhos/Portugal, 20 May 2017 – Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger-Synnevaag (NOR/NOR) seem to be unstoppable in WRC 2 category at Rally Portugal driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5. On Saturday they extended their lead, going into the final day with an advantage of more than three minutes. Teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) fought the hole of Saturday with M-Sport Ford Team Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN). Both teams suffered from punctures in the last stage of the day. The ŠKODA duo managed a faster tyre change and got second place as a reward.

The longest leg of the Rally Portugal saw an intense fight for second position right from the start on Saturday morning. While Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Anders Jæger-Synnevaag (ŠKODA FABIA R5) controlled the lead with a fast and measured drive, the Ford pairing of Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN) went fastest on the first two stages. On the first run of the longest special stage of the event, the 37.55 kilometres long “Amarante”, the ŠKODA teams fought back. Andreas Mikkelsen and Pontus Tidemand shared the fastest time with a more than 15 seconds advantage over Teemu Suninen. Just before midday service Tidemand climbed to second in WRC 2 category, leading Suninen by 5.9 seconds. “I am quite happy with my drive. I was pushing, but not too hard in order not to damage the car”, the Swedish ŠKODA factory driver said.

After service teams were heading back for a second loop of the three stages. And again, Suninen scored two fastest times in a row and took second position in WRC 2 back from Tidemand. On the last stage of the day, the second run over the 37 kilometres gravel road of “Amarante”, Suninen and Tidemand both got a puncture. Tidemand/Andersson changed the flat tyre faster than their competitors and consequently moved ahead into second place.

Sunday will feature the smooth and fast gravel roads close to the village of Fafe, situated in the northeast of Porto. The famous Fafe jump alone attracts ten thousands of enthusiastic rally fans. Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger-Synnevaag (ŠKODA FABIA R5) are now in the best position to win WRC 2, but the fight for second place in the category, starring Tidemand and Suninen, is far from over.



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Standings Rally Portugal after leg 2 (WRC 2)

1. Mikkelsen/Jæger-Synnevaag (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:40:36.3 h
2. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE) ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3:07.1 min.
3. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, +3:26.2 min.
4. Gilbert/Jamoul (FRA/BEL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 7:21.6 min.
5. Tempestini/Bernacchini (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3 R5, +4.18.8 min.

Number of the day: 25:35.5

The longest stage of Rally Portugal featured 37.55 kilometres of gravel. Quite unbelievable: The ŠKODA factory teams Mikkelsen/Jæger-Synnevaag (NOR/NOR) and Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE) were equal fastest with a time of exactly 25:35.5 minutes.

The 2017 calendar of 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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Media images:



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal

Andreas Mikkelsen and co-driver Anders Jæger-Synnevaag (ŠKODA FABIA R5) are leading WRC 2 category at Rally Portugal 2017

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal

Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson currently holding second position in WRC 2 at Rally Portugal 2017 driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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.

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- › 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.

