

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

Page 1 of 4



Rally Monte-Carlo: ŠKODA FABIA R5 driver Jan Kopecký wins WRC 2 category on his birthday

- › ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler achieved a dominant win in WRC 2 category at the opening round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
- › 17 years old ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä claimed second position in RC 2 class after a remarkable performance with his ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “What a fantastic start to the new season! Jan scored a dominant win on his birthday, Kalle delivered a perfect debut in Monte-Carlo.”

Monte-Carlo, 28 January 2018 – ŠKODA's Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) convincingly won the WRC 2 category at the season opener of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), the famous Rally Monte-Carlo. They took top spot after the fourth of 17 special stages and defended their lead up to the finish in Monte-Carlo despite very challenging road and weather conditions. On his birthday, Kopecký rewarded himself with the gift of not only winning the WRC 2 category, but also taking victory in RC 2 class and finishing 10th overall. While ŠKODA junior Ole Christian Veiby had to retire on Saturday due to a driver's error, teammate Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) brought home their ŠKODA FABIA R5 on second place in RC 2 class after a fast and controlled drive under difficult conditions.

Night stages, bright sunshine, rain, dry roads, so-called black ice, slushy snow and fog: The opening round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), the famous Rally Monte-Carlo, offered all kinds of road and weather conditions. On the last four stages on Sunday – including two passages over the legendary Col de Turini – again sheets of black ice and gravel on the asphalt roads made life difficult for the crews.

But on Sunday afternoon in front of the Royal Palace in Monte-Carlo, all the difficulties and challenges were forgotten. The sun was smiling from the azure blue sky – and so was Jan Kopecký (CZE). After four tough and challenging rally days, he received royal gifts on his 36th birthday: the trophies for winning WRC 2 category and RC 2 class. “During the last stages, it was really a challenge to stay focussed, find the right speed and to avoid any mistake. I had nothing more to gain but so much to lose. Now, a dream came true. On my seventh participation I could finally win. Many thanks to my co-driver Pavel Dresler and as well to the whole ŠKODA team for giving me such a fantastic car. The special design of my fantastic ŠKODA FABIA R5, which carries the tricolour of the Czech flag, brought me the luck you need to win this very special event,” beamed a happy Jan Kopecký.

ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler headed WRC 2 category already after the fourth stage of Rally Monte-Carlo, defending the lead both in WRC 2 and RC 2 class during four challenging days up to the finish in Monte-Carlo. They survived a hairy moment in the slushy snow of the ninth stage when Kopecký lost control of his ŠKODA FABIA R5 for a moment. After a lucky escape, he continued conservatively to the stage finish and up to the end of the rally. In the end Kopecký/Dresler won WRC 2 category by nearly 15 minutes, being first in RC 2 class as well with a margin of more than five minutes.



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 2 of 4

In the wake of the Czech Champions the youngest driver of the event, 17 years old ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä (FIN), and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN) delivered a stunning performance, cheered by thousands of fans alongside the special stages. They were not entered in WRC 2 category, thus not fighting for championship points on this occasion. "I was here to learn. This was a very challenging event, I really enjoyed driving here with my fantastic ŠKODA FABIA R5. On the last stages, I was really cautious to bring home this result," said a delighted Rovanperä at the finish.

ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) had to retire on Saturday afternoon. With a spin-caused contact with a barrier their ŠKODA FABIA R5 suffered damages too extensive to continue.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was totally happy at the finish in Monte Carlo. "After he was second on last year's Rally Monte-Carlo, Jan took a well deserved win this year. With all his routine and speed, he was simply unbeatable! Kalle's performance was incredible! This guy has what it takes to be a future champion. He showed pure speed combined with cleverness under the most difficult road conditions you can imagine," commented Hrabánek.

Final result Rally Monte-Carlo (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:35:38.5 h.
2. De Mevius/Louka (BEL/BEL), Peugeot 208, +14:46.1 min.
3. Scießere/Zanella (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3, +22:47.7 min.
4. Sunninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, +33:31.1 min.

Number of the day: 28

January 28th is the birthday of ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký – incidentally also the day he won WRC 2 category and RC 2 class at Rally Monte-Carlo.



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 3 of 4

The 2018 calendar of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	25/01–28/01/2018
Sweden	15/02–18/02/2018
Mexico	08/03–11/03/2018
France	05/04–08/04/2018
Argentina	26/04–29/04/2018
Portugal	17/05–20/05/2018
Italy	07/06–10/06/2018
Finland	26/07–29/07/2018
Germany	16/08–19/08/2018
Turkey	13/09–16/09/2018
Great Britain	04/10–07/10/2018
Spain	25/10–28/10/2018
Australia	15/11–18/11/2018

Further information:

Zbyněk Straškraba, Communications Motorsport

P +420 605 293 168

zbynek.straskraba@skoda-auto.cz

<http://skoda-motorsport.com>

ŠKODA Motorsport:

 Facebook  YouTube  Twitter

Media images:



ŠKODA at Rally Monte-Carlo 2018

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 carrying the tricolour of the Czech flag, won WRC 2 category and RC 2 class at Rally Monte-Carlo

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Monte-Carlo 2018

Time to celebrate: Jan Kopecký /Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) won WRC 2 category and RC 2 class at the opening round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018, the Rally Monte-Carlo

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





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Page 4 of 4

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) 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.

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 the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) 2016, Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker. 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.

2017 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) became WRC 2 Champions, ŠKODA Motorsport won the Team Championship. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) won the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the third time in a row and are the spearhead of in total 14 crews winning their country's national titles. Furthermore the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC) have been won by teams competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

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.

