

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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Rally Sweden: ŠKODA Motorsport aiming to repeat last year's success

- › In total 15 ŠKODA FABIA R5 are on the entry list
- › ŠKODA factory team fields WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson
- › Reigning FIA World Rally Cross Champion Johan Kristoffersson to compete in a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5

Mladá Boleslav, 14 February 2018 – ŠKODA Motorsport is aiming to continue its string of success in Sweden. Therefore the factory team has entered WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), who won the WRC 2 category already last year. Their young teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjærmoen (NOR/NOR) are targeting a podium position in WRC 2. Among the 15 entries in the WRC 2 category, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 was chosen by nine crews. Six more FABIA R5 are entered in RC 2 class. FIA World Rally Cross Champion Johan Kristoffersson as well trusts the rally expertise of ŠKODA.

"With Jan Kopecký's victory at Rally Monte-Carlo we experienced a perfect start to the 2018 season," emphasizes ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek. "I'm expecting an even closer fight in the WRC 2 category than last year. The fact, that in total 15 ŠKODA FABIA R5 are on the entry list, perfectly underlines the convincing reliability of this car even under extreme conditions," Hrabánek adds.

Last year Swedish WRC 2 champion Pontus Tidemand laid the foundation of his 2017 WRC 2 title win on his home event. "Rally Sweden is a very special event for me each year. I hope, I can celebrate again, together with our fans," Tidemand looks ahead. Victory will be all but easy, Tidemand reckons. He is expecting tough opposition. "Competition in WRC 2 category is really tight. To win I have to drive absolutely on the limit. I cannot afford one single mistake," the 27 years old Swede knows all too well.

Last year already, youngster Ole Christian "O.C." Veiby proved his talent by finishing third in WRC 2 category with a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5. "My main target is to score my first WRC 2 championship points in 2018. I'm fully concentrated to end up on the podium again, as I did in 2017," Veiby explains his target.

Special interest for the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018 is created by a guest appearance of Johan Kristoffersson. The reigning FIA World Rally Cross Champion will compete together with co-driver Patrick Barth in a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5 in RC 2 class. Kristoffersson is not competing for WRC 2 championship points, but nevertheless hopes to score some top three class results on a couple of stages. Rally Sweden is a home game for Kristoffersson as well. In 2016, he finished 11th in WRC 2 with a ŠKODA FABIA S2000. "I am looking forward to competing here again" says Kristoffersson before the event.

Rally Sweden will start on Thursday (15 February) at 20h08 on the trotting course in Karlstad in the southwest of Sweden. After the 1.9 kilometres long spectacular show stage, the real rally will



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commence on Friday (16 February). The crews leave the service park in Torsby early in the morning to head for additional 18 special stages which are covering in total around 314 kilometres on stages in the remote forests of Sweden and Norway. The rally finishes on Sunday (18 February) with the final power stage close to the service park in Torsby, the winners will be on the podium around 13h00.

Did you know...

...that Rally Sweden was first run in 1950 and was held in summer, before it became a winter event in 1965?

...that the extremely narrow snow tyres are fitted with 384 studs?

...that in 1973 only tyres without studs were allowed and national hero Stig Blomqvist won the event in a Saab despite having lost ten minutes with a fuel pump issue early on?

...that Rally Sweden was dominated by Scandinavian drivers until 2004 when WRC record champion Sébastien Loeb from France broke their dominance?

...that Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross won the A5 class at the 1993 Rally Sweden with a ŠKODA FAVORIT 136L?

...that each rally crew has to carry a snow shovel on board in order to be able to dig the car out of snow in case of an off-road excursion?



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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

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ŠKODA at Rally Sweden 2018

Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, want to repeat last year's WRC 2 victory.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Sweden 2018

At Rally Sweden, second round of 2018 FIA World Rally Championship, Ole Christian Veiby (right) and co-driver Stig Rune Skjærmoen aim for a podium position in WRC 2 category with their ŠKODA FABIA R5.

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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.

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 2) 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, KAROQ, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- › in 2017 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, Algeria 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.

