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Rally Argentina: Double WRC 2 lead for ŠKODA with Pontus Tidemand ahead of Kalle Rovanperä

- › After day two of the 2018 World Rally Championship's fifth round ŠKODA works crew Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson lead the WRC 2 category by 20.2 seconds
- › 17 years old Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen currently second despite a mishap in stage two, when they damaged the roof ventilation of their ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › ŠKODA crews dominate WRC 2 category winning all stages on Thursday and Friday
- › ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen take part without being registered for WRC 2 championship points, currently third in RC 2 class
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Pontus and Kalle are really fast on the tough gravel roads. But I'm sure they know, that they have to avoid unnecessary risks."

Villa Carlos Paz, 27 April 2018 – The WRC 2 category at Rally Argentina is dominated by ŠKODA Motorsport. After a thrilling fight on the second day of the rally, WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) lead their young ŠKODA teammates Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) by a mere 20.2 seconds. Norwegians Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen, another duo of ŠKODA juniors, are currently third in RC 2 class – which includes WRC 2 –, trailing Rovanperä by 9.3 seconds.

Rally Argentina, fifth round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), from the start line saw a tense fight in the WRC 2 category between ŠKODA Motorsport factory crews Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) and Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN). Rovanperä, 17 years old only, opened the duel by setting the first fastest time on the opening show special stage in the streets of Villa Carlos Paz, followed by Tidemand.

When the rally moved to the gravel roads of the Argentinian pampa on Friday morning, Pontus Tidemand moved into the lead with the fastest time. Kalle Rovanperä had a moment on the second stage. "There was a lot of dust, and at one junction, we missed a corner and slid off the road. A wire of a fence cut the roof ventilation cover away leaving virtually a hole on the roof. My co-driver Jonne had to hold the debris falling into the interior with one hand and his pace note book with the other one," he commented.

Due to this mishap, the Finnish youngsters lost more than half a minute in this stage and dropped to fourth position. With three fastest times in a row they moved back to second position in WRC 2 at the end of the morning loop.

After the midday service, Pontus Tidemand fought back and set the fastest time on the sixth stage, defending his lead against his young teammate Kalle Rovanperä. But one stage later, it was Tidemand's turn to report bad luck: "I got a slow puncture on the front left of my ŠKODA FABIA R5 a few kilometres from the end of the stage." Rovanperä scored his fifth fastest time and again reduced the gap to Tidemand. But the Swede finished the day off by winning the last stage. At the end of day two they are separated by 20.2 seconds.





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O.C. Veiby, who in Argentina is not registered to score points for the WRC 2 championship, also showed a strong performance on the Argentinian gravel roads, drove the fastest time in the RC 2 class on the second stage and at the end of Friday lies third in the class.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek commented: "It was again a very successful day for ŠKODA. Pontus and Kalle are really fast on the tough gravel roads. But I'm sure they know that they have to avoid unnecessary risks. It is still a long way to go. O.C. Veiby, who is, as well as Kalle, competing in Argentina for the first time, is also delivering a great performance!"

Standings Rally Argentina after Day 2 (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:36:25.1 h
2. Rovanperä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +20.2 sec.
3. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +1:27.0 min.
4. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +3:57.8 min.
5. Dominguez/Galindo (MEX/MEX), Hyundai i20 R5, + 5:34.0 min.

Number of the day: 8

All of the fastest times in the WRC 2 category on Thursday and Friday were set by the ŠKODA works crews, Rovanperä/Halttunen winning five and Tidemand/Andersson winning three stages.

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

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	24/01–28/01/2018
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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Media images:



ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2018

Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5, lead the WRC 2 category at Rally Argentina after day two

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2018

Finnish youngsters Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen make their first appearance at Rally Argentina and are currently in second position in WRC 2 category

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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.

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 1.2 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 35,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

