

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



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Rally Portugal: Pontus Tidemand achieved hat-trick win for ŠKODA increasing championship lead

- › After 2016 and 2017 WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson drove their ŠKODA FABIA R5 to the third WRC 2 win in a row at Rally Portugal
- › On his Rally Portugal premiere ŠKODA Junior Team Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen showed a steady learning curve, finishing sixth in WRC 2 category despite of punctures
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “With his third WRC 2 win of the 2018 season, Pontus is now in a very good position to defend his title.”

Matosinhos, 20 May 2018 – ŠKODA FABIA R5 crew Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) for the third time in a row won the WRC 2 category at the Rally Portugal. At the sixth round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018, the reigning WRC 2 Champions also achieved their third season win, increasing their lead in the championship standings. Their main pursuers are actually teammates Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler. They didn't compete in Portugal, but on the same weekend won Rally Český Krumlov, the third round of the Czech Rally Championship. Back in Portugal Finnish youngsters Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen (FIN/FIN), despite of suffering from a “record” five punctures, showed a steady learning curve finishing sixth in the WRC 2 category.

The 2018 Rally Portugal had ups and downs for the ŠKODA factory crews. After two punctures during the Friday leg of the rally, WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson started a race to catch up. On Saturday they stormed from fifth position into the lead of the WRC 2 category. During their first Rally Portugal, ŠKODA youngsters Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen showed a significant progress, delivering numerous fast times on the special stages. Despite a “record” number of five punctures they brought the ŠKODA FABIA R5 to the finish in sixth position of the WRC 2 category.

The final leg on Sunday was running over five stages of more than 50 kilometres of fast and smooth gravel roads. The highlight for ten thousands of enthusiastic rally fans was the spectacular and famous Fafe jump. Pontus Tidemand set the fastest time on the opening stage of the day, followed by his young teammate Juuso Nordgren. Both ŠKODA crews managed to finish the rally with a fast and controlled drive. Tidemand was totally happy at the finish in Matosinhos. “After our mishap during Friday, I never lost my confidence knowing how good the ŠKODA FABIA R5 handles on these Portuguese gravel roads. It is really amazing to win here for the third time in a row,” concluded the Swede. Juuso Nordgren finished sixth in the WRC 2 category although he collected another puncture on the final day. He said: “I am disappointed about my punctures, but I learned a lot during my first Portugal Rally. I really enjoyed the final day of the rally, the fantastic atmosphere, and I cannot wait to drive the ŠKODA FABIA R5 on gravel again.”

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was delighted, that ŠKODA Motorsport could, at the end, achieve another victory in Portugal after a difficult start. “I am happy, that we could win up to now five out of six rounds of the 2018 WRC 2 championship. With his third victory of the season, Pontus put himself into a fantastic position to defend his title. Juuso showed his potential driving some really fast times. Congratulations also to ŠKODA privateer Lukas Pieniazek, who delivered a great performance finishing second in the WRC 2 category,” he commented.



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Not as fast as the ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally cars, but with the same reliability, two ŠKODA KAROQ served as road safety cars for the rally organisers, driving the same distance of more than 1,580 kilometres in total and nearly 360 kilometres on gravel stages. ŠKODA/Siva sponsored the popular Rally Portugal and was the official car supplier for the event.

Final Result Rally Portugal (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:03:57.4 h
2. Pieniasek/Mazur (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2:06.5 min
3. Lefebvre/Moreau (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +2:23.5 min
4. Loubet/Landais (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20 R5, +3:10.5 min
5. Arai/Macneall (JPN/AUS), Ford Fiesta R5, +5:31.6
6. Nordgren/Suominen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +5:41.1 min

Current championship standings WRC 2 (after 6 of 13 rounds)

1. Tidemand (SWE), ŠKODA, 93 points
2. Kopecký (CZR) ŠKODA, 50 points
3. Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 40 points
4. Heller (CHL), Ford, 31 points
5. Katsuta (JPN), Ford, 29 points

Number of the day: 3

ŠKODA factory crew Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson for the third time in a row won the WRC 2 category at Rally Portugal, at the same time scoring their third WRC 2 win of the 2018 season.

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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ŠKODA at Rally Portugal 2018

WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, for the third time in a row won the WRC 2 category at Rally Portugal

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal 2018

At their Rally Portugal premiere Finnish ŠKODA juniors Juuso Nordgren and Tapio Suominen were delayed by punctures, but finished a credible sixth

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal 2018

Two ŠKODA KAROQ served as road safety cars for the rally organisers, driving the same distance of more than 1,580 kilometres in total and nearly 360 kilometres on gravel stages

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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.

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.

