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Rally Italia Sardegna: ŠKODA drivers Kopecký and Veiby fighting for WRC 2 victory on the Mediterranean island

- › Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) aim for third season win in the WRC 2 category of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › On the gravel tracks of Sardinia, ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen want to move up in the WRC 2 Championship rankings
- › In 2018 ŠKODA has won already five out of six rounds of the WRC 2 Championship
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "At the up-coming Rally Italia Sardegna our successful ŠKODA FABIA R5 is again the most popular car in its category."

Mladá Boleslav, 4 June 2018 – ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký (CZE) can definitely be called "Mister 100 per cent". Together with his navigator Pavel Dresler (CZE) he won all rallies up to now he started in 2018. The ŠKODA crew won all three rounds of the Czech Rally Championship and on top of that the WRC 2 category of the World Championship rounds Rally Monte-Carlo and Rally France-Tour de Corse. At the up-coming Rally Italia Sardegna (07/06–10/06/2018), they want to continue their winning streak and reduce the gap to WRC 2 overall leader and teammate Pontus Tidemand, who as planned is not competing on the Mediterranean island. ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) are competing in the factory team's second ŠKODA FABIA R5. In 2017 the two Norwegians finished second behind winner Kopecký and are again among the top favourites for victory on Sardinia's tough gravel stages this year.

After dominating all three past rounds of the 2018 Czech Rally Championship (MČR), Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) are returning to FIA World Rally Championship. After victories at Rally Monte-Carlo and Rally France-Tour de Corse the Czech crew is currently occupying second place in the WRC 2 category standings. "Although a lot of people think, I am a pure tarmac specialist, I succeeded in winning in Sardinia last year. I am looking forward to a return to that island," underlines Jan Kopecký. One of his toughest opponents is young O.C. Veiby, who finished second in WRC 2 on Sardinia last year. "I feel well prepared for the sandy, but rough tracks. My participation at Rally Argentina, where I finished second in RC 2 class, will help me a lot and we are now aiming for another good result," he commented.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek is more than happy with the performance of ŠKODA Motorsport in the 2018 season. "Reaching halftime of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship we were able to achieve five out of six possible wins in the WRC 2 category so far. On top of that, we delivered more than 200 ŠKODA FABIA R5 to customers. Among the twelve entries in the WRC 2 category at Rally Italia Sardegna, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 again seems to be the most popular car," emphasizes Hrabánek.

Rally Italia Sardegna offers 20 special stages totalling more than 313 kilometres on rugged and sun-baked gravel roads. Not only the tough gravel roads, but as well the temperatures are a challenge for the crews. While it has 28 Centigrade outside, the temperatures inside the rally cars can easily raise up to 68 degrees. After the Super Special Stage on Thursday at the rally cross circuit of Ittiri, Friday features four stages in the north of the island, each run twice. Saturday is





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again the longest day of the rally with seven special stages covering over 146 kilometres. Sunday will bring the final decision with four stages close to the coast north of the host town of Alghero.

Did you know...

... the event today known as Rally Italia first took place in 1928 under the name "Rally of the Flowers" and was a part of the FIA World Rally Championship ever since its inauguration in 1973?

...that the Italian round of the FIA World Rally Championship until 2003 was held on the mainland of Italy and was based in Sanremo before it moved to the island of Sardinia?

...Michèle Mouton became the first – and until today only – woman to win a WRC round when she came first at the Sanremo Rally in 1981?

...that the iconic stage "Monte Lerno" of Rally Italia Sardegna features a famous jump, comparable to the Fafe jump in Portugal, which is called "Micky's jump"?

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

| <u>Event</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rallye Monte-Carlo | 24/01–28/01/2018 |
| Rally Sweden | 15/02–18/02/2018 |
| Rally Mexico | 08/03–11/03/2018 |
| Rally France | 05/04–08/04/2018 |
| Rally Argentina | 26/04–29/04/2018 |
| Rally Portugal | 17/05–20/05/2018 |
| Rally Italia Sardegna | 07/06–10/06/2018 |
| Rally Finland | 26/07–29/07/2018 |
| Rally Germany | 16/08–19/08/2018 |
| Rally Turkey | 13/09–16/09/2018 |
| Rally Great Britain | 04/10–07/10/2018 |
| Rally Spain | 25/10–28/10/2018 |
| Rally 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>

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ŠKODA at Rally Italia Sardegna 2018

Reigning Czech Champions Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE), driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, want to repeat their last year's victory in the WRC 2 category at Rally Italy Sardegna

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Italia Sardegna 2018

Norwegian ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) want to move up in the WRC 2 championship standings with their 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.

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.



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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, 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.

