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Rally Turkey: ŠKODA's Kopecký on his way to WRC 2 title after retirement of teammate Tidemand

- › ŠKODA works crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler regained lead of WRC 2 category after the third day of Rally Turkey Marmaris, 10th round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › Teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson could not re-start due to safety reasons after their ŠKODA FABIA R5 had been damaged on the last stage of Friday
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Today Jan and Pavel impressed me with a faultless and fast drive on the tough gravel stages in Turkey."

Marmaris, 15 September 2018 – Recovering from transmission issues ŠKODA works crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) on Saturday regained the lead of the WRC 2 category at Rally Turkey Marmaris (13–16/09/2018), 10th round of the FIA World Rally Championship. After they had to retire on Friday's last stage, teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) could not re-start due to safety reasons. However, Tidemand's title hopes are not gone completely. In case Kopecký wins in Turkey, mathematically the next WRC 2 Champion could only be one of these two ŠKODA factory drivers.

Saturday morning of Rally Turkey Marmaris started with sad news for the ŠKODA fans. The tense battle for victory in the WRC 2 category between Jan Kopecký and teammate Pontus Tidemand prematurely came to the end. After collecting a third puncture on the last stage of Friday and on top of that having broken the suspension, reigning WRC 2 Champion Tidemand provisionally had to stop and to retire from third place.

When his ŠKODA FABIA R5 was inspected in service later that evening, additional structural damage was discovered. After consulting with the technical stewards of the FIA it was obvious that a sustainable and safe repair could not be carried out on the spot. As a consequence, Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson were not able to re-start under Rally 2 regulations the next day.

So Czech Rally Champion Jan Kopecký had everything in his hands. Another victory would make a WRC 2 championship most possible. But there were still ten tough gravel stages waiting for the crews. On Saturday alone six more stages totalling 134.20 kilometres had to be driven. Kopecký had a good start into Saturday, setting the second quickest time in WRC 2 and increasing his category lead. But on the third stage of the day, a broken drive shaft limited his ŠKODA FABIA R5 to rear wheel drive only. Kopecký lost two and a half minutes and dropped to second position behind ŠKODA privateer Chris Ingram. At midday service, his car was repaired and he could start the afternoon leg with a fully working car. Consequently Kopecký reduced the gap to WRC 2 leader Ingram. On the longest stage of the day alone, the 34.24 kilometres of "Yesibelde", he gained 41 seconds closing in to Ingram to less than half a minute with two Saturday stages to go.



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Avoiding any mistakes, Kopecký finally regained the category lead while ŠKODA privateer Ingram dropped to third position due to a puncture. In case Kopecký wins in Turkey, mathematically the next WRC 2 Champion could only be him or Pontus Tidemand.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek commented: "Today Jan and Pavel impressed me with a faultless and fast drive on the tough gravel stages in Turkey."

After 17 tests in total, the winner will reach the podium in Marmaris on Sunday (16 September) at around 13h00.

Standings Rally Turkey Marmaris after Day 3 (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:51:28.4 h
2. Tempestini/Itu (ROM/ROM), Citroën C3 R5, +44.5 sec.
3. Ingram/Whittock (GBR/GBR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:23.3 min.
4. Kajetanovicz/Szepaniak (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +3:08.3 min.
5. Heller/Olmos (CHL/CHL), Ford Fiesta R5, +6:59.1 min.

Number of the day: 44,5

Despite two punctures on Friday and transmission issues on Saturday, ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký holds the lead in the WRC 2 category by 44.5 seconds.

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 Turkey Marmaris 2018

ŠKODA works crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) regained the WRC 2 category lead after day three of Rally Turkey Marmaris

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ŠKODA at Rally Turkey Marmaris 2018

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) impressed with a fast and clever performance on the tough gravel stages of Rally Turkey Marmaris

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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. In 2018 Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) managed to win the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the fourth consecutive time.

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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.