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ŠKODA at RallyRACC Catalunya: New WRC 2 champion Jan Kopecký wants to crown season with another win

- › With two rallies to go, ŠKODA works crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler is uncatchable in the WRC 2 overall standings of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018
- › ŠKODA Motorsport prematurely conquered the WRC 2 Championship for Teams for the fourth time in a row
- › After WRC 2 victory at the recent Wales Rally GB, ŠKODA youngsters Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen aim for another category win at championship's 12th round in Spain
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "We are very proud that we could defend both WRC 2 Championship titles for drivers and teams."

Mladá Boleslav, 23 October 2018 – ŠKODA's Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler will enter the upcoming RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España (25/10–28/10/2018) as newly crowned WRC 2 champions. With only two rallies left in the 2018 season, the Czech duo is uncatchable in the WRC 2 overall standings. Also, ŠKODA Motorsport already secured the WRC 2 Championship for Teams. *(both titles subject to official publication of the results by the FIA)* ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) compete for the first time in Spain and aim for another top result after their maiden WRC 2 win for ŠKODA at the recent Wales Rally GB.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek is more than happy with his team's 2018 season: "We saw a fantastic fight between Pontus Tidemand and Jan Kopecký for the WRC 2 championship. We equally granted six rallies to both drivers. Jan is doing his rally number six in Spain. He can't be caught by Pontus anymore, because he has already done six events. We are very proud that we could defend both WRC 2 Championship titles for drivers and teams, ŠKODA crews winning ten out of eleven rounds of the WRC 2 championship 2018 so far. We warmly welcome Volkswagen entering the R5 competition for the first time with the Polo in Spain." For ŠKODA Motorsport, RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España marks the end of a successful season. The final round of the FIA World Rally Championship, Rally Australia, never was part of the team's 2018 program.

One of the toughest rivals for new WRC 2 champions Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler will be ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovanperä, who together with co-driver Jonne Halttunen recently won the WRC 2 category at Wales Rally GB right after his 18th birthday. "The victory in Wales was great. Hopefully we can keep this momentum into the Spanish WRC round to finish the season on a high," says the young Finn.

Nevertheless, Kopecký also looks forward to Spain's championship round with optimism. "I have a really fantastic season so far and could win every rally I was competing in, in total five WRC 2 events and six rallies of the Czech Rally Championship. Last year, I missed the victory in Spain. After all the championship pressure is gone now, I will try my best to settle that bill," emphasizes the Czech champion.



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As twelfth round of the FIA World Rally Championship, RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España offers a special challenge for the 21 WRC 2 crews, among them nine competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5. The Spanish WRC round is the championship's only mixed surface rally. The first leg on Friday is held on gravel roads with some tarmac sections. On Saturday and Sunday all stages are entirely run on asphalt. In total, the teams have to face 18 special stages totalling 331.58 kilometres of racing against the clock. The winner will reach the podium at the rally's host town Salou in the south of Catalunya's capital Barcelona at 14h01 on Sunday (local time).

Did you know...

...that the WRC event in Spain/Catalunya is the only one which features a mix of gravel stages during leg one and asphalt stages during legs two and three?

...that on Friday evening the service time is 1:15 hours and thus 30 minutes longer than usual, allowing the teams to convert the cars from gravel into tarmac spec?

...that the spectacular Barcelona street stage is back as opener of RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España on Thursday evening?

...that RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España was first run in 1957, became a round of the European Rally Championship (ERC) in 1975 and in 1991 for the first time was part of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)?

...that at RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España the cars in WRC 2 category are allowed to use a maximum of 10 gravel tyres and 24 asphalt tyres plus an extra of four tyres for shakedown?

...that at RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España the service park is hosted by the PortAventura World Theme Park, featuring the spectacular Dragon Khan roller coaster with eight loops and a top speed of more than 110 kph?

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 RallyRACC Catalunya 2018

WRC 2 championship leaders Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) are uncatchable in the overall standings and want to crown a successful season with a WRC 2 victory at RallyRACC Catalunya

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at RallyRACC Catalunya 2018

After their recent WRC 2 win at Wales Rally GB, ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen aim for another top result in Spain

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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.

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.