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ŠKODA defends WRC 2 Title again

- › Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler crown fantastic season with WRC 2 title
- › ŠKODA crews won eleven out of 13 WRC 2 rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018, including four double wins for ŠKODA Motorsport factory team
- › For the third time in a row a ŠKODA works crew won WRC 2 Drivers Championship
- › ŠKODA factory drivers conquer top three places of the WRC 2 overall standings
- › After 2015, 2016 und 2017 ŠKODA Motorsport again secures WRC 2 Team Championship

Mladá Boleslav, 27 November 2018 – Game, set and match for ŠKODA Motorsport: Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) became WRC 2 champions, 2017 winners Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson finished second overall, and youngsters Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) complete a pure ŠKODA podium in the final standings of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 category. For the fourth time in a row ŠKODA Motorsport won the WRC 2 Championship for Teams (all titles subject to official publication of the results by the FIA).

The season at a glance:

Rally Monte-Carlo 24/01/–28/01/2018

ŠKODA's Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) convincingly won the WRC 2 category at the season opener of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), the famous Rally Monte-Carlo. They took top spot after the fourth of the 17 special stages and despite very challenging road and weather conditions defended their lead until the finish in Monte-Carlo. On his 36th birthday, Kopecký rewarded himself with the gift of not only winning the WRC 2 category, but also taking victory in RC 2 class and finishing 10th overall. While ŠKODA junior Ole Christian Veiby had to retire on Saturday due to a driver's error, teammate Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) – on this event not registered for WRC 2 – brought home their ŠKODA FABIA R5 on second place in RC 2 class after a fast and controlled drive under difficult conditions.

Result Rally Monte-Carlo (WRC 2) (only 4 crews classified)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:35:38.5 h.
2. Sciorsere/Zanella (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3, +22:47.7 min.
3. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, +33:31.1 min.
4. De Mévius/Louka (BEL/BEL), Peugeot 208T16 R5, + 33:46.1 min.

Rally Sweden 15/02/–18/02/2018

The two ŠKODA Motorsport crews Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) and Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjærmoen (NOR/NOR) climbed onto Rally Sweden's WRC 2 podium with second and third position after a thrilling battle for category's honours. After the victory of Jan Kopecký at Rally Monte-Carlo, the good start of ŠKODA Motorsport into the 2018 motorsport season continued at the second round of the FIA World Rally Championship.

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Result Rally Sweden (WRC 2)

1. Katsuta/Salminen (JAP/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, 3:01:27.5 h
2. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 4.5 sec.
3. Veiby/Skjærmoen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 30.5 sec.
4. Adielsson/Johansson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:49.3 min.
5. Touhino/Hämäläinen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 2:29.9 min.

Rally Mexico 08/03–11/03/2018

ŠKODA factory crew Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) achieved a dominant WRC 2 win at Rally Guanajuato Mexico, finishing 7th overall with their ŠKODA FABIA R5. With his first WRC 2 win of 2018, Pontus Tidemand also took the championship lead after three rounds. Teammates Kalle Rovannerä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) had to retire after the second stage but could re-start under Rally 2 regulations for Saturday's and Sunday's legs. They scored five fastest WRC2 times and still finished 5th in the category.

Result Rally Mexico (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:04:32.7 h
2. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +6:44.6 min.
3. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +13:53.4 min.
4. Bulacia Wilkinson/Mussano (BOL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +22:45.9 min.
5. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:02:54.1 h

Rally France/Tour de Corse 05/04–08/04/2018

ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) celebrated a start-to-finish win of the WRC 2 category at Rally France/Tour de Corse. Their young Norwegian teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) initially were delayed by a malfunctioning gear link shift, came back with a number of WRC 2 stage wins and finally by just 1.8 seconds missed the podium, which was completed by Italian ŠKODA privateer Fabio Andolfi.

Result Rally France/Tour de Corse (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:37:27.5 h
2. Bonato/Boulloud, (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +1:51.2 sec.
3. Andolfi/Scattolin (ITA/ITA), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3:08.5 min.
4. Veiby/ Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3:10.3 min.
5. Pieniazek/Mazur (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +13:05.6 min.

Rally Argentina 26/04–29/04/2018

Reigning WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) repeated their last year's victory at Rally Argentina. The Swedish pairing also took the overall lead in the WRC 2 championship standings from ŠKODA teammate Jan Kopecký, who did not compete in Argentina. ŠKODA factory crews Tidemand/Andersson and Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN) were leading the WRC 2 category going into the event's last day. But in the penultimate stage, Rovannerä went off the road. The crew was unhurt, but had to retire. Norwegians Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen, another duo of ŠKODA juniors, thanks to a great performance finished second in RC 2 class, which includes the WRC 2 category.



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Result Rally Argentina (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:55:44.7 h
2. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +7:39.1 min.
3. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +9:02.9 min.
4. Dominguez/Galindo (MEX/MEX), Hyundai i20 R5, + 15:49.6 min.
5. Solans/Ibanez (ESP/ESP), Ford Fiesta R5, +37:43.9 min.

Rally Portugal 17/05–20/05/2018

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. The reigning WRC 2 Champions also achieved their third season win, increasing their lead in the championship standings. Teammates Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler 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.

Result Rally Portugal (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:03:57.4 h
2. Pieniazek/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

Rally Italia Sardegna 07/06–10/06/2018

Time to celebrate in the beautiful harbour of Alghero on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia: At Rally Italia Sardegna ŠKODA Motorsport achieved a double victory. Jan Kopecký (CZE) and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE) powered their ŠKODA FABIA R5 to their third season victory in the WRC 2 category. ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian "O.C." Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermøen (NOR/NOR) finished second after an impressive race to catch up. At that point of the season, ŠKODA factory drivers Pontus Tidemand, Jan Kopecký and O.C. Veiby were holding the top three positions of the WRC 2 championship standings.

Result Rally Italia Sardegna (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:42:33.3 h
2. Veiby/Skjaermøen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3:02.6 min.
3. Ciamin/de la Haye (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20, +3:18.7 min.
4. Andolfi/Scattolin (ITA/ITA), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +6:32.2 min.
5. Pieniazek/Mazur (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +7:11.3 min.

Rally Finland 26/07–29/07/2018

For the best part of three days of Rally Finland, ŠKODA's 17 years old Kalle Rovannerä (FIN) and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN) looked like the dominant winners of the WRC 2 category. But during Saturday's penultimate stage, the left front suspension broke when the car hit a rock under braking. After roadside emergency repairs, the two Finns managed to finish the day in fourth position. With a stunning race to catch up, they set all fastest times in WRC 2 during the last leg and finally missed the podium by just 1.9 seconds. While Rovannerä's factory teammates Ole

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Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) had to retire after an accident on Saturday, local ŠKODA privateers Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC 2 category. For the current Finnish Championship leaders this victory was the biggest success of their career so far.

Result Rally Finland (WRC 2)

1. Pietarinen/Raitanen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 2:45:18.4 h
2. Huttunen/Linnaketo, (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20, +1:06.8 min.
3. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:34.9 min.
4. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2:36.8 min.
5. Loubet/Landais (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20, +4:05.0 min.

Rallye Deutschland (16–19/08/2018)

What a thrilling final for the WRC 2 category at Rallye Deutschland! After having lost valuable time with a puncture on Saturday morning, ŠKODA factory crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) started an impressive comeback. They finally scored their fourth WRC 2 victory of the season and went into the lead of the championship standings. ŠKODA teammates Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) also delivered a fantastic performance on their first pure tarmac event for the ŠKODA factory team and finished second ahead of ŠKODA privateers Fabio Andolfi/ Emanuele Inglesi (ITA/ITA).

Result Rallye Deutschland (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE) ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:16:49.7 h
2. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3.8 sec.
3. Andolfi/Inglesi (ITA/ITA), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +18.1 sec.
4. Kreim/Christian (DEU/DEU), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +50.9 sec.
5. Kajetanovicz/Szepaniak (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +54.4 sec.

Rally Turkey Marmaris (13–16/09/2018)

ŠKODA factory crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) made a big step forward to secure the WRC 2 title by winning the category at Rally Turkey Marmaris. Teammates Pontus Tidemand/ Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) had to retire during the Friday loop. From then onwards the Swede had only mathematical chances to defend his title. At the same time, ŠKODA Motorsport prematurely for the fourth time in a row won the FIA WRC 2 Championship for Teams, this time three rallies before the season finale.

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Result Rally Turkey Marmaris (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 4:17:49.7 h
2. Tempestini/Itu (ROM/ROM), Citroën C3 R5, +1:11.9. min.
3. Ingram/Whittock (GBR/GBR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:56.1 min.
4. Kajetanovicz/Szepaniak (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:48.7 min.
5. Heller/Olmos (CHL/CHL), Ford Fiesta R5, +7:41.2 min.

Wales Rally GB (4-7/10/2018)

ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) achieved a start-to-finish victory in the WRC 2 category at Wales Rally GB. With second place, teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) secured the season's third double victory in the WRC 2 category for ŠKODA Motorsport. Having celebrated his 18th birthday during Monday's pre-event test, Rovannerä took the WRC 2 lead already on Thursday during the first special stage and defended it until the finish line in Llandudno. He set the foundation of his dominant category victory during the Friday leg, increasing the lead over teammate Pontus Tidemand finally to more than one minute. In total, the young Finn set 15 fastest WRC 2 times over the 23 stages.

Result Wales Rally GB (WRC 2)

1. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:15:27.2 h
2. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:34.2 min.
3. Greensmith/Gelsomino (GBR/ITA), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:13.6 min.
4. Huttunen/Linnaketo (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20 R5, +2:56.8 min.
5. Lefebvre/Moreau (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +4:35.4 min.

Rally Spain (25/10–28/10/2018)

Sun, gravel, rain and wet tarmac – Rally Spain offered all kind of challenges for the 20 crews, who competed in the WRC 2 category. After the rally switched from gravel to tarmac for the Saturday leg, ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovannerä and navigator Jonne Halttunen stormed into the category lead, unimpressed by heavy rain. Finally, they secured their second WRC 2 win of the season, which made them climb up to third overall in the WRC 2 championship standings behind teammates Jan Kopecký and Pontus Tidemand. After a tense fight for three days, Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler came home second.

On the podium in Salou alongside the Mediterranean Sea, new WRC 2 champion Jan Kopecký was more than happy: "This is a very special day for me. On the date today, my home country celebrates its 100th birthday. We are delighted to become WRC 2 champions and so could crown a fantastic season!" One of the first to congratulate was Christian Strube, Head of Technical Development ŠKODA AUTO. ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek added: "Now it is time to celebrate! Kalle and Jan did a great job. The whole team made it possible, that we enjoy the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport!"



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Result Rally Spain (WRC 2)

1. Rovanperä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:20:47.6 h
2. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +8.5 sec.
3. P. Solberg/Engan (NOR/NOR), Volkswagen Polo GTI R5, +1.36.6 min.
4. Kajetanovicz/Szczepaniak (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +1.59.6 min
5. Solans/Marti (ESP/ESP), Ford Fiesta R5, +2.59.3 min

Rally Australia (15-18/11/2018)

As planned, ŠKODA Motorsport did not enter the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship's final round.

Final Standings WRC 2 Championship

1. Jan Kopecký (CZE) ŠKODA, 143 points
2. Pontus Tidemand (SWE), ŠKODA, 111 points
3. Kalle Rovanperä (FIN), ŠKODA, 90 points
4. Gus Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 70 points
5. Pieniazek (POL), ŠKODA 56 Punkte

FIA Regional Championships:

Scoring victories on all five rounds, one team dominated the **2018 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)** – ŠKODA driver Yuya Sumiyama and navigator Takahiro Yasui from Japan. Their Team Cusco's achievements seamlessly continued the success, ŠKODA Motorsport factory supported teams celebrated during the past years in the Asia Pacific region. Celebrating an APRC hat trick from 2012 to 2014 with the normally aspirated ŠKODA FABIA S2000, the following years the Czech brand added four titles in a row with the turbo-powered ŠKODA FABIA R5.

Manvir Singh Baryan/Drew Sturrock (KEN/GBR) won the **FIA African Rally Championship (ARC)**. Scoring four victories with their privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5, they could repeat last year's victory.

After winning the **FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR)** in 2013, 2016 and 2017, ŠKODA crew Gustavo Saba/Fernando Mussano (PRY/ARG) again were successful. Among the three victories, first place of the CODASUR category at the FIA World Championship round in Argentina was their season highlight.

In the **FIA European Rally Championship (ERC)**, the three top spots of the Under 28 category (for drivers under 28 years old, driving a R5 car) were conquered by ŠKODA FABIA R5 drivers. Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov (RUS/RUS) won from Chris Ingram/Dave Whittock (GBR/GBR) and Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian (DEU/DEU).



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Overview Titles and Championships won by ŠKODA teams in 2018:

FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

FIA WRC 2 Champions Driver/Co-driver: Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE)
FIA WRC 2 Team Championship: ŠKODA Motorsport

FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)

Championship for Driver and Co-driver: Yuya Sumiyama/ Takahiro Yasui (JPN/JPN)
APRC Cup for Manufacturers: ŠKODA
APRC Teams Award: Team Cusco

FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR)

Championship for Driver/Co-driver: Gustavo Saba/Fernando Mussano (PRY/ARG)

FIA African Rally Championship (ARC)

Championship for Driver/Co-driver: Manvir Singh Baryan/Drew Sturrock (KEN/GB)
ARC Manufacturer Cup: ŠKODA

FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), U28 category

Championship for Driver/Co-driver: Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov (RUS/RUS)

National Championships

Australia	Eli Evans/Ben Searcy (AUS/AUS)
Belgium	Kris Princen/Bram Eelbode (BEL/BEL)
Bulgaria	Miroslav Angelov/Nidialko Sivov (BGR/BGR)
Croatia	Krisztián Hideg/István Kerék (HRV/HRV)
Cyprus	Simos Galatariotis/Antonis Ioannou (CYP/CYP)
Czech Republic	Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE)
Finland	Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen (FIN/FIN)
France (Gravel)	Sylvain Michel (FRA)/Jerome Degout (FRA)
Lebanon	Roger Feghali/Joseph Matar (LBN/LBN)
Netherlands	Hermen Kobus/Erik de Wild (NLD/NLD)
Paraguay	Gustavo Saba/Fernando Mussano (PRY/ARG)
Poland	Grzegorz Grzyb/Jakub Vrábel (POL/POL)
Slowakia	Martin Koči/Radovan Mozner Jun. (SVK/SVK)
Spain (Gravel)	Xavier Pons/Diego Sanjuan (ESP/ESP)
Sweden	Martin Berglund/Joakim Gevert (SWE/SWE)
Switzerland	Ivan Ballinari/Paolo Pianca (CHE/CHE)
Turkey	Burak Cukurova/Vedat Bostanci (TUR/TUR)



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ŠKODA Motorsport Crews

Driver:	Jan Kopecký (Czech Republic)
Born:	28 January 1982 in Opočno/today Czech Republic
First rally:	2001 Rally Šumava/Czech Republic (ŠKODA OCTAVIA S2000)
First WRC rally:	2002 Rally Deutschland/Germany (Toyota Corolla WRC)
Co-driver:	Pavel Dresler (Czech Republic)

To follow the footsteps of his father Josef, who was an avid rally driver, Jan Kopecký started karting at the age of 13. As soon as possible the young Czech changed to circuit racing, working up his ranks on national level. Soon he started winning, among others the 2001 ŠKODA OCTAVIA Cup. Using the rally version of the ŠKODA OCTAVIA S2000 Kopecký gave his rallying debut the same year and never looked back.

Competing a ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC in the Czech Championship (ČMR) he impressed the right people at ŠKODA Motorsport. Promoted to factory driver he won his first of today six Czech titles in 2004, driving a ŠKODA FABIA WRC.

When after a break ŠKODA Motorsport returned to rallying in 2009 with the ŠKODA FABIA S2000, Jan Kopecký again was one of the factory drivers. He finished the season scoring second overall in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) and third overall in the Czech Championship. He backed up these results by finishing second overall in the IRC the three following years in a row, always driving a ŠKODA FABIA S2000. In 2012 Kopecký, since then partnered with co-driver Pavel Dresler, again became Czech Champion, taking the European Rally Championship (ERC) a year later with a record six wins.

Up to that point Kopecký had made his name mainly as a tarmac specialist. But in 2014 the former racing driver surprised some people. On demanding gravel stages on the other side of the globe the ŠKODA FABIA S2000 driver won the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

When the ŠKODA FABIA R5 arrived in early 2015, Kopecký started a remarkable series of victories in the Czech Championship. Up to the end of 2018 he was never beaten on home soil again, taking the Czech title from 2015 to 2018 four times in a row.

Also in 2015 Kopecký celebrated his debut win on WRC 2 level of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) during Rally Deutschland. In 2017 for the first time he won a gravel rally on world championship level, taking the win on the gruelling Sardinia roads during Rally Italy. Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler ended the 2017 WRC 2 season fourth overall. In 2018, they had a fantastic season, winning five WRC 2 events, finishing second once and Jan Kopecký finally conquering the 2018 WRC Drivers Championship.

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Co-Driver: Pavel Dresler (Czech Republic)

Born: 23 June 1986 in Beloved /today Czech Republic

First rally: 2005 Rally Střela/Czech Republic

First WRC rally: Rally Italy Sardegna 2015

Co-driver to: Jan Kopecký (Czech Republic)

On first sight, it looks as if Pavel Dresler has been the co-driver to Jan Kopecký since ages. But in fact the two ŠKODA stalwarts work together since 2011 only. Before that Dresler was navigating different drivers, sometimes competing in nearly 20 events per year. During this time he won the FIA Historic European Rally Championship 2011. Even today Dresler is following a separate career – as assistant professor for mechanical engineering at the Technical University of Ostrava.

Naturally he is interested in everything mechanical, especially current and historic cars. He could as well have ended up as a professional skier. Dresler started racing down snowy slopes when he was only three years old.

When Dresler finally joined Kopecký, they immediately made their mark in their native championship. Driving a ŠKODA, the duo won the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the first time in 2012, repeating this success four times in a row between 2015 and 2018 again for a ŠKODA Motorsport. In 2013 Dresler added the title of the modern FIA European Rally Championship to his tally, further extending his collection with the trophy for the overall winner of the FIA Asia Pacific Rally Championship in 2014.

His World Championship debut came in 2015, again as co-driver to Kopecký. The 2018 season was their eighth together at ŠKODA Motorsport, ending with the drivers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 category as well as another Czech title.



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Driver: Pontus Tidemand (Sweden)

Born: 10 December 1990 in Charlottenberg/Sweden

First rally: 2007 Dan Anderssons Minne/Sweden (Volvo 940)

First WRC rally: 2012 Rally Sweden (ŠKODA FABIA S2000)

Co-driver: Jonas Andersson (Sweden)

When Pontus Tidemand for the first time stood at the start of a cross kart race, he was 13 years old. But he already had eleven years of quad driving experience under his belt – and apparently learned a lot from it. However, the following years the young Swede won a couple of cross kart titles on home soil and in the Nordic Championship before finally moving on to rallying.

To hone his asphalt driving skills he also did some circuit racing. This strategy perfectly accelerated his rally career. After winning a one make series Tidemand took the overall Swedish title in 2011 at the age of 20 – the youngest ever rally champion of Sweden.

After been selected for the FIA Young Driver Excellence Academy Tidemand advanced to the FIA Junior World Rally Championship (J-WRC) in 2012. In only his first season he finished third overall. In between he started competing a four-wheel drive ŠKODA FABIA S2000 as well in his native championship as on world championship level. When Tidemand won the J-WRC in 2013 he definitely proved to be one of the fastest drivers of his generation.

Next step on his career ladder was the FIA World Championship's WRC 2 category. In 2014 already, he celebrated his first win (Rally Deutschland). When he was not busy in the FIA World Rally Championship, Tidemand competed in the FIA World Rallycross Championship, driving an Audi S1 Supercar for the team of his fellow countryman Mattias Ekström. Best result was fourth place during the German round.

In 2015 Tidemand was signed by ŠKODA Motorsport. He paid back by winning five rounds and in the end taking the title of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). In between he regularly raced WRC 2 rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship. WRC 2 was Tidemand's main playing field in 2016 as well, now joined by new co-driver Jonas Andersson.

2017 turned out to be the most successful season so far for Pontus Tidemand. By winning in Sweden, Mexico, Argentina, Portugal and Wales plus scoring some more top results he took the drivers title of the FIA World Championship's WRC 2 category. In addition, his performance was the corner stone for ŠKODA winning the WRC 2 manufacturers crown. 2018 he became second in the WRC 2 championship after a tense fight with teammate Kopecký.



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Co-driver: Jonas Andersson (Sweden)

Born: 1 January 1977 in Arvika/Sweden

First rally: 1992 Sprint Rally/Sweden

First WRC rally: 2002 Rally Sweden

Co-driver to: Pontus Tidemand (Sweden)

Born on New Year's Day 1977 Jonas Andersson's route into motorsport came through Folk race, a popular and affordable Swedish form of rallycross. As well as throwing well-beaten cars around rallycross tracks he also started rallying already at the age of 15. Things got serious in 2002 when he moved up to the Swedish Championship alongside fellow Swede Per-Gunnar Andersson (no relation). By 2003 they were regular contenders on FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) level. In 2004 the two Anderssons won the FIA Junior World Rally Championship (J-WRC), a title they claimed again in 2007.

In 2006, Andersson co-drove a ŠKODA FABIA WRC for the first time, when touring car ace and DTM champion Mattias Ekström was looking for a navigator to compete at Rally Deutschland. Again alongside Per-Gunnar Andersson, he also co-drove the same car to two victories in the Norwegian Championship in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

2010 saw Andersson, who is an avid football fan supporting the English Premier League's team Arsenal London, switch to co-drive alongside Norwegian Mads Østberg. They won the Norwegian Rally Championship in 2011 and again in 2012, celebrating a maiden WRC victory at Rally Portugal the same year. In 2012 as well as in 2015, Østberg and Andersson finished fourth overall in the WRC.

By 2016, feeling the need for a new challenge, Andersson opted to join ŠKODA Motorsport as co-driver to fellow Swede Pontus Tidemand. In 2017 already, the newly formed crew won the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 category, followed up by runner-up position in 2018.



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Driver: Kalle Rovannerä (Finland)
Born: 1 October 2000 in Jyväskylä/Finland
First rally: 2013 Rallijsprints Gulbis/Latvia (Citroën C2 R2)
First WRC rally: 2017 Wales Rally GB/UK (Ford Fiesta R5)
Co-driver: Jonne Halttunen (Finland)

Kalle Rovannerä has rallying virtually in his blood. His father Harri in his prime was factory driver for several teams. He even scored one victory in the FIA World Rally Championship (Sweden 2001).

When he was eight years old, Kalle was filmed drifting a small Toyota rally car through snowy forests like an expert. The video years later went viral on YouTube with more than one million views.

Because Finnish law doesn't allow participation in rallies before the age of 18 – until Kalle got an exemption from that rule – he went to Latvia, starting with rally sprints at the age of twelve. For the next couple of years, co-driver Risto Pietiläinen, not by chance father Harri's former navigator, had to drive the road sections. That didn't stop little Kalle from winning the Latvian Junior Championship in 2015, following it up with the main championship in 2016 and 2017, on both occasions driving ŠKODA FABIA R5.

Meanwhile Finnish manager legend Timo Jouhki had taken over, sending the teenager from Finland's rally capital Jyväskylä to the Italian Rally Championship 2016 to get some experience on tarmac. During the Memorial Bettega, a rally show in Bologna, Rovannerä drove a World Rally Car beating some factory drivers on his way to the final.

On October 2nd 2017 he passed his driving test, one day after his 17th birthday courtesy to a waiver by the Finnish government. With this important paper in the pocket, Rovannerä was finally cleared to compete on international events. 22-years-old Jonne Halttunen became the new co-driver instead of Risto Pietiläinen (then 50).

Rovannerä started at the British WRC round Wales Rally GB only three weeks after his 17th birthday. On the 2017 season's finale in Australia Rovannerä became the youngest driver ever to win a round of the WRC 2 category. In 2018, he won the WRC 2 rounds in Wales – only days after his 18th birthday – and Spain, finishing his first season at ŠKODA Motorsport on third overall of the WRC 2 Championship for Drivers.

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Co-driver: Jonne Halttunen (Finland)

Born: 13 December 1985 in Jyväskylä/Finland

First rally: 2007 Jari-Pekka Rally (Finland)

First WRC rally: 2011 Rally Finland

Co-driver to: Kalle Rovannerä (Finland)

Jonne Halttunen came into Kalle Rovannerä's car with two titles as Finnish Champion under his belt, both won co-driving Teemu Asunmaa in a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5 in 2015 and 2016. Asunmaa/Halttunen repeated this success in 2017. Obviously not a full-time job, because during the same season Halttunen navigated Kalle Rovannerä to first overall in the Latvian Championship as well. The Finnish duo also won the WRC 2 category at the 2017 season closing Rally Australia.

2018 turned out to be his most successful year yet. Together with Kalle Rovannerä he won the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 rounds in Great Britain/Wales and Spain, ending the season on third spot in the WRC 2 overall standings.

Halttunen has a heart not only for the latest generation of rally cars. In 2016 he became runner-up in the Historic European Rally Championship, co-driving fellow Finn Ville Silvasti in a Porsche 911 Carrera.

As if rallying is not providing enough adrenaline to his body, Jonne Halttunen is looking for adventures in his spare time as well. Whenever possible he conducts different kinds of action sports, including motocross, karting and scuba diving.



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ŠKODA Motorsport: A tradition of success – from motorcycling to FIA World Rally Championship

- › Since 1901, ŠKODA has been winning on race circuits and rally tracks around the globe
- › ŠKODA's motorsport roots lie in the famous motorcycle races of the early 20th century
- › In the 1970s and '80s, the ultralight rear-engined racer ŠKODA 130 RS drove to a series of victories on race tracks
- › Today the ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the most successful WRC 2 car of the FIA World Rally Championship, continuing the success story of ŠKODA Motorsport

Mladá Boleslav, 27 November 2018 – ŠKODA's motorsport roots reach back more than 117 years. On June 1901, Narcis Podsedníček entered the long-distance race from Paris to Berlin for the first time, riding a L&K motorcycle made by ŠKODA's founding fathers Laurin and Klement. What had begun in 1901 on two wheels, continued in the 1970s and '80s with a worldwide series of victories on race circuits and rally tracks. Today the ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the most successful WRC 2 car of the FIA World Rally Championship, continuing the success story of ŠKODA Motorsport.

Early years and first victories

The love of motorsport goes all the way back to the company's founding fathers Václav Laurin and Václav Klement (L&K). Just two years after the start of motorcycle production at L&K, they trusted racer Narcis Podsedníček with their new L&K single-cylinder motorcycle and, in 1901, sent him to the long-distance race from Paris to Berlin. Podsedníček was one of ten drivers who competed in the category of motorcycles and three-wheelers. On his L&K bike he reached the finish line first. He arrived in Berlin on 30 June 1901 at three o'clock in the morning – before the official timing had even been set up. A policeman testified his arrival time, but nevertheless he was disqualified. At the end, only three French drivers with three-wheelers from De Dion-Bouton were classified, but the moral winner was Podsedníček.

However, Laurin and Klement saw their economic future on four wheels. From 1905 onwards their cars continued the success story. Besides victories at hill climbs and endurance races, the Laurin & Klement FCS, powered by a four cylinder engine delivering 95 bhp, set a speed record of 118.72 kilometres per hour at Brooklands race circuit in the UK.

1936 – 1986: ŠKODA established as force to be reckoned in motor racing

During the period between the two wars, ŠKODA cars impressed technically with their central tube frame. On January of 1936, the ŠKODA POPULAR SPORT took second place in the category at the challenging Monte Carlo Rally. The ŠKODA RAPID repeated this success one year later. After World War II, a two-seater sports car based on the ŠKODA 1101 production model impressed on the race track at Spa-Francorchamps, driven by Czech and other European drivers. The new car was as well successful at the Monte Carlo Rally and the gruelling Tour d'Europe. Later the ŠKODA OCTAVIA, presented in 1959, went from success to success.

The ŠKODA 1000 MB marked a new chapter for the brand in the 1960s. In 1964, the first ŠKODA with rear-wheel drive and rear-mounted engine again represented a new technological approach. With his successor ŠKODA 130 RS Norwegian rally driver John Haugland achieved a lot of

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remarkable results. The car, because of his technical layout given the affectionate nickname 'Porsche of the East', won its class at the Monte Carlo Rally and the Acropolis Rally (1977). The ŠKODA 130 RS also won the European Touring Car Championship 1981 and achieved class wins at the RAC Rally in 1985 and 1986. Again John Haugland was the most successful driver behind the steering wheel of the ŠKODA 130 LR.

1990s: Further success in World Rally Championship

ŠKODA's presence in modern motorsport started with the Monte Carlo Rally of 1991. Pavel Sibera/Petr Gross, driving a ŠKODA FAVORIT, won F2 class that and the following three years (1991-1994). In 1991, the ŠKODA FAVORIT also won the FIA World Rally Championship's Cup for vehicles featuring engines with less than two litre capacity and one driven axle. In 1996, the new ŠKODA FELICIA Kit-Car, with Swedish professional Stig Blomqvist at the wheel, achieved a third place overall at the RAC Rally.

With the ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC, introduced in 1997, the works team entered the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) on top level for the first time. The all-wheel-drive vehicle with a 300 bhp turbo engine achieved an outstanding third place overall at the rough Safari Rally Kenya of 2001. From 2003 to 2007, the successor model, the ŠKODA FABIA WRC, also made a big impact.

FABIA SUPER 2000 and FABIA R5 writing motorsport history

In 2009 the ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 took the rally scene by storm – until then, no rally car had been more successful in this category. Between 2009 and 2014 the car won 50 national and international titles worldwide. The Czech duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler won the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) in 2013. The FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) was won by teams driving a ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 three years in a row (2012 – 2014).

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 – which had been officially approved (homologated) for motorsport by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) on 1 April 2015 – already drove to its first international success in its first season. Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson won for ŠKODA again the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship title. On top of that, ŠKODA teams took five national titles.

In 2017, ŠKODA Motorsport factory crew Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson became the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 Drivers and Co-Drivers Champions, ŠKODA Motorsport also won the WRC 2 Team Championship. Czech Champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler were 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) were won by teams competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

And 2018 was even more successful for ŠKODA Motorsport. Now it was ŠKODA's factory crew Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler turn to win the WRC 2 category of the FIA World Rally Championship, ahead of teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson. At the same time 18 years old ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä together with co-driver Jonne Halttunen conquered third place overall in the category. ŠKODA Motorsport for the fourth time in a row won the WRC 2 Team Championship as well.

The successful involvement of the factory team in international rallying also acts as a catalyst for customer interest which is becoming bigger and bigger: To date, almost 250 ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally cars have been sold to privateer teams and ŠKODA importers around the world.



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ŠKODA FABIA R5 got a new home base New headquarter for ŠKODA Motorsport

- › ŠKODA Motorsport operates out of new 16,400 square metres facilities close to the ŠKODA AUTO factory in Mladá Boleslav
- › Purpose-built premises offer ample place for engineering, workshops and logistics

Mladá Boleslav, 27 November 2018 – ŠKODA Motorsport is now operating out of a brand new headquarter close to the ŠKODA Auto factory in the outskirts of Mladá Boleslav. The purpose-built facilities host all departments of ŠKODA Motorsport under one roof and can serve the needs of the customers and the factory team even better.

Research and development, production, workshop, storage, workshop for prototypes, logistics, offices and a show room for customers are concentrated in the brand new facilities close to the ŠKODA AUTO factory near Mladá Boleslav. The persons working for ŠKODA Motorsport share 1,859 square metres of office space and 3,844 square metres of workshop and storage facilities. In total, the new premises cover 16,400 square metres.

Christian Strube, Head of Technical Development ŠKODA AUTO, says: "With this new headquarter, we are prepared for the future challenges. Due to an improved workflow, we can develop and built up cars even more efficient and make our service for our customers even better. Last year, our target was to provide more than 200 FABIA R5 to customers worldwide. And we delivered! Up to now, almost 250 FABIA were sold. In order to keep that momentum, these new premises are an ideal foundation for the future success of our motorsport program."

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek emphasizes: "This brand new facility clearly demonstrates ŠKODA's commitment to motorsport. It will help us a lot to improve our customer service and to continue the success story of ŠKODA Motorsport worldwide!"



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ŠKODA Motorsport celebrates successful season

A golden ŠKODA FABIA R5 honours ŠKODA Motorsport's most successful year in its history.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



The new ŠKODA FABIA R5

ŠKODA Motorsport has today unveiled the new FABIA R5 in Prague.

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ŠKODA Motorsport celebrates successful season

Jan Kopecký (on the right) and Pavel Dresler crown fantastic season with WRC 2 title.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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ŠKODA Motorsport celebrates successful season

Christian Strube, ŠKODA AUTO Board Member for Technical Development, Pavel Dresler, Jan Kopecký and ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek celebrating FIA WRC 2 Title.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

Infographic: ŠKODA Motorsport celebrates successful season

In 2018 ŠKODA won not just FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), but also many regional and national championships, incl. FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and FIA African Rally Championship (ARC).

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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. 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.

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