

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Rally France: ŠKODA Motorsport's Kalle Rovannerä fighting for WRC 2 Pro category lead

- › After second places at Rallye Monte-Carlo and Rally Sweden, Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) want another good result in WRC 2 Pro category
- › Finnish pairing is facing the tough tarmac rally on the Corsican island for the first time
- › 11 crews competing with a ŠKODA FABIA R5 make the Czech brand again the most popular among the 25 crews strong entry list of R5 cars at the French round of the WRC

Mladá Boleslav, 25 March 2019 – The fourth round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship, the Rally France/Tour de Corse (28/03–31/03/2019), offers a tough challenge on the Mediterranean island. Driving a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5, Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen are facing the winding and narrow roads of the 14 special stages for the very first time. After two second places at Rally Monte-Carlo and Rally Sweden, the Finnish crew is aiming for another good result in the WRC 2 Pro category, which would allow them to take the overall lead in the category.

Although they have a limited experience on pure asphalt rallies, Kalle Rovannerä and Jonne Halttunen already last year proved their speed on tarmac roads. The Finns, who finished third overall in the WRC 2 championship of 2018, took a second place in the category at Rally Germany and won the gravel/tarmac mixed event in Spain. “The Tour de Corse is unique to any other asphalt rally. There are virtually no straights, but literally thousands of corners. Although I have never been on the island before, I want to achieve another good result there,” emphasizes Kalle Rovannerä.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek explains: “Although we are not officially present with our factory team at Tour de Corse, we nominated Kalle as point’s scorer for ŠKODA Motorsport in the WRC 2 Pro category. Therefore, he will be able to score in the WRC 2 Pro driver’s championship as well. If he can manage a successful result on Corsica, he will be in a good position to fight for the title. Nevertheless, we should never forget that he is competing on the island for the first time. To win there, you not only need speed – endurance plays a significant role as well.”

In France, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the most popular rally car in the R5 category. At the French round of the World Rally Championship, young French talented driver Pierre-Louis Loubet and his co-driver Vincent Landais are a crew to watch in the R5 field. Russian crew Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov won the FIA ERC U28 Junior Championship 2018 and are aiming for a top result on the Mediterranean island as well.

The rally France/Tour de Corse features a new layout this year. 14 stages with racing in total 347.51 kilometres against the stopwatch will bring the decision. The longest stage “Castagniccia” alone covers more than 47 kilometres. The rally starts on Thursday, 28 March, at 19h00 in the town of Porto-Vecchio in the southeast of the island. On Friday, 29 March, six stages with no opportunity for service in between are waiting for the teams, before they finally head to the service park close to the airport of Bastia. On Saturday (30 March), more than half of the competitive mileage of the whole rally has to be driven in the north of the island, before on Sunday (31 March) the final two stages will bring the decision. The winner will reach the podium in the village of Calvi at 15h00.



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Did you know that...

...already from 1973 to 2008, the Tour de Corse was the French round of the World Rally Championship, but then lost the place in the calendar for a couple of years?

...that France is with 43 cars sold up to now most successful market for the ŠKODA FABIA R5 and the most popular R5 rally car in France?

...the Tour de Corse in 2011 and 2012 was a round of the Intercontinental Rally Championship (IRC) as well as being 2013 and 2014 part of the European Rally Championship (ERC)?

... between 2010 and 2014 the French round of the FIA World Rally Championship took place in the mainland Alsace region before returning to Corsica, today being one of the absolute classics in the WRC calendar alongside legends like the Rallye Monte-Carlo?

...the longest stage with more than 47 kilometres is the final test of a roughly 90 kilometres section to be driven with one set of tires only?

... compared to 2018, the route is mostly new with only two stages carried over from last year?

...the start (now in Porto-Vecchio) and the location of the finish (this year in Calvi) are new as well?

## The calendar of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2 Pro)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	24/01–27/01/2019
Sweden	14/02–17/02/2019
Mexico	07/03–10/03/2019
<b>France</b>	<b>28/03–31/03/2019</b>
Argentina	25/04–28/04/2019
Chile	09/05–12/05/2019
Portugal	30/05–02/06/2019
Italy	13/06–16/06/2019
Finland	01/08–04/08/2019
Germany	22/08–25/08/2019
Turkey	12/09–15/09/2019
Great Britain	03/10–06/10/2019
Spain	24/10–27/10/2019
Australia	14/11–17/11/2019

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### ŠKODA at Rally France/Tour de Corse

#### Rovanperä fighting for WRC 2 Pro category lead

ŠKODA Motorsport works crew Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) want to conquer the lead in the WRC 2 Pro category at the upcoming French round of the FIA World Rally Championship.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at Rally France/Tour de Corse

#### Rovanperä fighting for WRC 2 Pro category lead

Kalle Rovannerä (ŠKODA FABIA R5), currently third in the WRC 2 Pro category standings of the FIA World Rally Championship, is competing for the first time at the Corsican rally.

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## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

2018 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport so far. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) became WRC 2 champions and managed to win the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the fourth consecutive time. 2017 WRC 2 winners Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson finished second overall, and youngsters Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) completed 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.

The success story of the Czech brand took place worldwide. The private ŠKODA driver Yuya Sumiyama and navigator Takahiro Yasui from Japan won the 2018 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), Manvir Singh Baryan/Drew Sturrock (KEN/GBR) took the title win in the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC). 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. On top of that, ŠKODA crews won 17 national championships.

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.

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.

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › was founded during the pioneering days of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established automobile companies in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ, as well as the KAMIQ and the SUPERB.
- › delivered more than 1.25 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2018.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs over 39,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.