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Wales Rally GB: Match point for ŠKODA's Kalle Rovanperä chasing the WRC 2 Pro title

- › With a category win in Wales, ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo crew Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen could prematurely secure the 2019 WRC 2 Pro Championship
- › ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký competes with new navigator Jan Hloušek at Wales Rally GB, twelfth round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › ŠKODA Motorsport leads manufacturers' standings of WRC 2 Pro Championship

Mladá Boleslav, 1 October 2019 – With a category victory at Wales Rally GB (03/10–06/10/2019), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo crew Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) could prematurely secure the WRC 2 Pro title of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019. Teammate Jan Kopecký (CZE) is primary targeting valuable championship points for ŠKODA Motorsport in the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' championship. He will be navigated by Jan Hloušek (CZE), who replaces long-time co-driver Pavel Dresler.

Driving their usual ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen are having match point for prematurely winning the WRC 2 Pro title for drivers at the upcoming Wales Rally GB, twelfth round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019. So far, the overall leading Finns have scored four category wins, finished second twice and can also add the points for one third place to their tally. As only the eight best results of in total 14 events count for the championship, they could prematurely secure the title by repeating their last year's victory in Wales. "I am not so much focussed on points. After my mishaps in Germany and in Turkey, where I finished third in the category, I want to have a clear run like last year, when I managed to win," Rovanperä says. "I am confident, my ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo performs very well and I like the nice and smooth gravel tracks in the Welsh forests."

For the reigning WRC 2 and Czech Rally Champion, Jan Kopecký, the upcoming Wales Rally GB is a very special event. His long-time co-driver Pavel Dresler will be replaced by Jan Hloušek. "I want to thank Pavel for his professional work and commitment during the past eight years. He was an important key to successes like winning the FIA European Rally Championship 2013, the FIA Asian Pacific Rally Championship 2014 and finally, as an icing on the cake, the WRC 2 Championship in 2018," emphasizes Kopecký. "I am happy, that I could get the services of Jan Hloušek for Wales Rally GB. Alongside Filip Mareš, Jan already collected loads of international experience and did an excellent job by navigating him to the FIA European Junior Championship recently."

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek describes Jan Kopecký's mission for Wales: "By winning the category in Germany and finishing second in Portugal, Italy and Turkey, Jan already collected valuable points for the manufacturers' championship of the WRC 2 Pro category for ŠKODA. We trust in his reliability and we are convinced, that he is able to provide us with additional important points from Wales."

Wales Rally GB gets on its way on Thursday (3 October) at 19h08 with a 3.58 kilometres long show stage on the famous race track of Oulton Park. On Friday (4 October) the crews are facing nine stages totalling 118.25 kilometres. The most challenging and longest leg of the rally with seven



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stages over 152.50 kilometres awaits on Saturday (5 October). Sunday (6 October) finally features five more stages over 38.42 kilometres. After a total of 312.75 kilometres in the race against the clock, the winner will reach the podium in the seaside village of Llandudno at around 13h33.

Did you know...

...that run for the first time in 1932, the then called Royal Automobile Club Rally – in short RAC Rally – attracted 341 competitors?

...that in 1960, for the first time the forests of Wales, the Lake District and the notorious Kielder Forest were used for the special stages?

...that in 1990 for the first time pre-rally inspection of the special stages – commonly known as “recce” – and pace notes were allowed? Before 1990 all stages had to be driven with rough information only, the co-driver relying on nothing than a detailed road map.

...that in the past, the RAC Rally was a tough marathon test? In 1983 for example the rally covered 3,046 kilometres with 58 special stages totalling 844 kilometres. Winner Stig Blomqvist (Audi Quattro) amassed a stage time of 8 hours, 50 minutes and 28 seconds. Ladislav Křeček/Bořivoj Motl won the A5 class with a factory entered ŠKODA 120 LS finishing 25th overall.

...the start will take place at Liverpool’s historic waterfront and the event has been relocated from Deeside to the coastal resort of Llandudno? Close to the service park, the notorious Great Orme stage along the coast line has to be driven.

...that the first stage of the rally will take place at the famous race track Oulton Park on a mixed surface of gravel and tarmac?

...that up to the year 2000, the British round of the FIA World Rally Championship usually used stages in England, Scotland and Wales before it entirely moved to Wales?



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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
France	28/03–31/03/2019
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 Wales GB 2019

With a category win at Rally Wales GB, Kalle Rovander and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) could prematurely secure the WRC 2 Pro drivers' title

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ŠKODA at Rally Wales GB 2019

ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký competes with new navigator Jan Hloušek at Wales Rally GB, twelfth round of the FIA World Rally Championship

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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.

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- › 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.

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