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RallyRACC Catalunya: Kalle Rovanperä and Jan Kopecký on track to secure WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' championship for ŠKODA

- › After day 1 of the penultimate round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019 in Spain, ŠKODA Motorsport is set to prematurely win the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' title
- › On Friday evening, already crowned 2019 WRC 2 Pro drivers' champions* Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) hold second position of the category with teammates Jan Kopecký/Jan Hloušek in third
- › ŠKODA crew Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais heads WRC 2 class for private teams

Salou, 25 October 2019 – After the first day of RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España (24/10–27/10/2019), the second and third placed ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo crews Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) and Jan Kopecký/Jan Hloušek (CZE/CZE) are well on track to prematurely secure the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019 for ŠKODA Motorsport. Meanwhile inside the WRC 2 for private teams, the category's overall leaders Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais (FRA/FRA) hold top spot in another ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, getting one step closer to the respective championship.

The RallyRACC Catalunya-Rally de España, which is the full name of the thirteenth round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019, offered a special challenge for the crews. The Spanish WRC round is the championship's only mixed surface rally. While during the rest of the weekend tarmac awaits, the first leg on Friday (25 October) was held on gravel roads with only some short tarmac sections. For the ŠKODA works crews Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen and Jan Kopecký/Jan Hloušek the task was clear right from the start: Their only mission was to secure enough points for ŠKODA Motorsport to prematurely win the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019.

From the first special stage, Kalle Rovanperä was fighting with Citroën's Mads Østberg for the lead of the WRC 2 Pro category. After the three stages of Friday morning, the Finnish ŠKODA youngster was in second position behind his rival and third among the 26 R5 cars. Meanwhile teammate Jan Kopecký was third of the WRC 2 Pro category ahead of Ford driver Gus Greensmith. Kalle Rovanperä started the afternoon loop with a harder tyre compound and confessed: "Now my feeling with the tyres is much better and the driving is more enjoyable. Hopefully, all the rest of the afternoon stages will be better for us." Still the newly crowned WRC 2 Pro Champion* finished the day in second position of the WRC 2 Pro category and was looking forward to the two days to come. "I hope, we can improve during the remaining two legs on tarmac."

Inside the WRC 2 category for private teams, championship leaders Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais (FRA/FRA) again deliver a stunning performance. The French ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo crew defended the lead in the highly competitive category and finished the day second among the R5 competitors. With a win, they would already have one hand at the championship trophy.

On Saturday and Sunday (26/27 October), all stages are entirely run on asphalt. In total, the teams have to face 17 special stages adding up to 325.56 kilometres of racing against the clock. The



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winner will reach the podium at the rally's host town Salou in the south of Catalonia's capital Barcelona at 14h01 local time on Sunday (27 October).

**subject to the publication of the official results by the FIA*

Standings RallyRACC Catalunya after leg 1 (WRC 2 Pro/WRC 2)

1. Østberg/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), Citroën C3 R5, 1:24:24.5. h*
2. Loubet/Landais (FRA/FRA), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, +14.8 sec.
3. Camilli/Veillas (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +16.3 sec.
4. Veiby/Andersson (NOR/SWE), VW Polo GTI R5, +37.0 sec.
5. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, +41.2 sec.*
6. Kajetanovicz/Szcepaniak (POL/POL), VW Polo GTI R5, +44.3 sec.
7. Gryazin/Fedorov (RUS/RUS), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, +48.1 sec
8. Kopecký/Hloušek (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, +1:07.1 min.*

**Factory nominated crews eligible to score points in the WRC 2 Pro category*

Number of the day: 12

12 ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo and ŠKODA FABIA R5 among the 26 R5 cars on the entry list make ŠKODA again the strongest brand of the category.

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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Further information:

Zbyněk Straškraba, Communications Motorsport
P +420 605 293 168

zbynek.straskraba@skoda-auto.cz

<http://skoda-motorsport.com>

ŠKODA Motorsport:



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ŠKODA at RallyRACC Catalunya 2019

ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovander/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) holds second in WRC 2 Pro after leg 1 of the Spanish WRC round

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at RallyRACC Catalunya 2019

After leg one of the thirteenth round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019, Jan Kopecký and co-driver Jan Hloušek (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) are third of the WRC 2 Pro category

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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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.