

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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ŠKODA Motorsport ready for tough test at the Rally Mexico

- › Works driver Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson in action at one of the most difficult rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › Competitors faced with 370 kilometres of special stages and altitudes of up to 2737 metres
- › Michal Hrabánek: “This is an extraordinary test for man and machine.”

Mladá Boleslav, 6 March 2017 – Following a perfect start to the season, with two wins from two races, ŠKODA Motorsport now takes on the ultimate test in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Works driver Pontus Tidemand (S) and his co-driver Jonas Andersson (S) will tackle a good 370 kilometres against the clock at the Rally Mexico, which takes place from Thursday to Sunday. From the spectacular opening in the capital Mexico City, the competitors climb to 2737 metres above sea level and the highest point in this year’s World Rally Championship.

“The Rally Mexico is an extraordinary test for man and machine. However, we are determined to master this new challenge,” said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. “At the Rally Sweden, Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson had to cope with snow and ice, and claimed a dominant victory. The task is now to produce top performances in the heat and at high altitude in some sections of the route. The driving duo and the team will have to be fully focussed at all times,” Hrabánek added.

The action kicks off on Thursday with a genuine highlight in the heart of Mexico City. Tidemand, at the wheel of his ŠKODA FABIA R5, will be out to thrill the tens of thousands of fans at Zócalo square. The competitors must then tackle the famous “El Chocolate” stage twice on Friday. At 54.90 kilometres, this is one of the longest stages of the season. The drivers will also take a trip underground on the Friday, as the route heads through the old mining tunnels in Guanajuato. Generally speaking, the rough gravel roads put particular strain on both the tyres and the engine – after all, the route climbs as high as 2737 metres above sea level, where the thin air robs engines of up to 20 per cent of their power.

“The Rally Mexico is very special, and will really put us through our paces,” said Tidemand. “I am really looking forward to the many fans and varied routes. We have made a great start to our world championship campaign, and obviously want to challenge for the win in Mexico too,” Tidemand continued. Sweden’s Motorsport Athlete of the Year 2016 is tied with Andreas Mikkelsen (N) at the top of the WRC 2 standings. The Norwegian won the opening round of the season, the Rally Monte Carlo – also at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA R5. Starting last season, the high-tech four-wheel drive powerhouse from the Czech Republic has now won twelve of the last 13 WRC 2 rallies. Hopes are high that the next chapter in this spectacular success story will be added at the Rally Mexico.



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The 2017 calendar for the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	19.01.–22.01.2017
Rally Sweden	09.02.–12.02.2017
Rally Mexico	09.03.–12.03.2017
Rally France	06.04.–09.04.2017
Rally Argentina	27.04.–30.04.2017
Rally Portugal	18.05.–21.05.2017
Rally Italy	08.06.–11.06.2017
Rally Poland	29.06.–02.07.2017
Rally Finland	27.07.–30.07.2017
Rally Germany	17.08.–20.08.2017
Rally Spain	05.10.–08.10.2017
Rally Great Britain	26.10.–29.10.2017
Rally Australia	16.11.–19.11.2017

Did you know ...

... four ŠKODA FABIA R5s will start the 2017 Rally Mexico? As well as ŠKODA works driver Pontus Tidemand, Mexican Benito Guerra, Poland's Hubert Ptaszek and Khalid Al-Suwaidi from Qatar will also put their faith in the turbo-powered car from the Czech Republic.

... last year's Rally Mexico was won by a driver at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA R5? Back then, it was Finland's Teemu Suninen who took his place on the top step of the podium.

... after two rounds, the top four in the overall WRC 2 standings includes three ŠKODA FABIA R5 drivers? Following his victory at the iconic Rally Monte Carlo, Andreas Mikkelsen (N) is tied at the top on 25 points with works driver Pontus Tidemand. The second ŠKODA works driver, Jan Kopecký (CZ) is currently fourth with 18 points.

... the Rally Mexico climbs to 2737 metres above sea level? This is the highest point in this year's world championship. Thin air means the engines lose roughly 20 per cent of their power.

... the Rally Mexico is the first all-gravel rally of 2017? The majority of the Rally Monte Carlo was held on asphalt, with some sections on ice. At the Rally Sweden, the entire route was covered in snow and ice.

... the 1979 Rally Mexico was held for the first time in 1979? It has featured on the calendar of the FIA World Rally Championship since 2004.

... the venue for the first special stage in Mexico City will be familiar from a James Bond film? It formed the backdrop for the opening helicopter scene in "Spectre". Over 200,000 fans are expected to flock to the Zócalo square for the World Rally Championship.

... the Rally Mexico goes underground? The competitors will drive through the old mining tunnels beneath Guanajuato on Friday. Tens of thousands of rally fans make the annual pilgrimage to take in this spectacle.

... the service park is located in one of the five largest cities in Mexico? León is located about 400 kilometres from Mexico City and has about 1.6 million inhabitants.





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ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Mexico

Works driver Pontus Tidemand is looking forward to the many fans and varied routes in Mexico.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Sweden

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 showed all its class on the snow and ice in Sweden. In Mexico, it will rely on its familiar qualities on gravel.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been 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 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.

In 2015, ŠKODA celebrated four victories in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with their new ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally car. The high-tech 4x4 was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. In the ŠKODA FABIA R5's very first season, factory duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) secured the fourth APRC title in a row for ŠKODA. In addition, the brand claimed five national titles with their new winning model.

ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 proudly continues the brand's long tradition in motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA Super 2000, was the most successful model in ŠKODA's 115-year motorsport history. With the 4x4 from Mladá Boleslav, factory duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the historic feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the drivers' title in the ERC and the APRC in consecutive years. Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 drivers won a total of 50 national and international titles around the world.

In 2016, the factory teams Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (F/F) are competing with the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

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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, YETI, KODIAQ and SUPERB.

in 2016 delivered more than 1 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 and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.

employs over 30,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

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