

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

Page 1 of 4



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Rally Mexico: Tidemand extends his lead in the ŠKODA FABIA R5

- › ŠKODA Motorsport duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson successfully conquer iconic El Chocolate stage and the highest point in the world championship
- › Two morning stages cancelled at round three of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › Pontus Tidemand: "We are growing in confidence on the difficult routes in Mexico"

León/Mexico, 11 March 2017 – Pontus Tidemand (S) and Jonas Andersson (S) extended their lead in the ŠKODA FABIA R5 on an eventful day at the Rally Mexico. The successful duo clocked the fastest time on four of the day's five stages and successfully conquered the highest point in this year's FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) on the iconic "El Chocolate" stage. However, the start of the rally action was delayed by almost five hours on day two in Mexico: the two stages scheduled for the morning had to be cancelled after a traffic jam had delayed the rally cars on the way back from the capital Mexico City.

"That was a challenging day for everyone. After waiting so long to get started, I put too much strain on the brakes on the opening stage. Things improved significantly after that. We are growing in confidence on the difficult routes in Mexico," said Tidemand. The Swedish Motorsport Athlete of the Year 2016 led going into day two of the rally, following two stage wins on the street circuit in the capital Mexico City on Thursday. However, he briefly surrendered the top spot to Frenchman Eric Camilli on the "El Chocolate" stage – at 54.90 kilometres one of the longest on the WRC calendar. The competitors reached the highest point in the 2017 World Rally Championship at almost 2750 metres above sea level, where the engines were forced to work extra hard in the thin air.

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 passed this particularly tough test with flying colours, and 26-year-old Tidemand immediately regained the lead in WRC 2 with a dominant stage win. From the high mountains, the WRC caravan headed straight underground in Guanajuato. The route took the drivers through tunnels left from former silver mines. They were then faced with two runs in the "Autódromo de León" at the end of an extremely varied day of rallying. Here too, ŠKODA driver Tidemand was the fastest man. He eventually ended the day with a 35.4-second lead over second-placed Camilli. Mexican Benito Guerra is also on course for a podium finish in third place. Like Tidemand, the local favourite is at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

"I expect a big battle for the win. We have to be quick on the rough gravel roads, but at the same time drive in a controlled manner if we are going to have a chance," said Tidemand, looking ahead. Over 210 kilometres of special stage are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. Only then will we know who will succeed last year's WRC 2 winner Teemu Suninen. The Finn won the 2016 Rally Mexico in a ŠKODA FABIA R5.



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

Page 2 of 4



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Rally Mexico standings (WRC 2):

1. Tidemand/Andersson (S/S)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	1:04:58.1 hrs
2. Camilli/Veillas (F/F)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 0:35.4 min
3. Guerra/Rozada (MEX/E)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 1:07.2 min

Number of the day: 74.58

74.58 kilometres of special stage originally planned for Friday had to be cancelled. A traffic jam resulted in the rally cars being too late leaving Mexico City to return to the service park in León, the first two runs of the iconic "El Chocolate" and "Las Minas" stages had to be scrapped in the morning. This brought the total number of kilometres against the clock at the Rally Mexico down to under 300.

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

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ŠKODA
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Page 3 of 4

Media images:



ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Mexico

Works duo Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson were fast again in the old mine tunnels on Friday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at the Rally Mexico

The FABIA R5 was up to the task on the rock-hard gravel roads encountered on day two of the world championship rally.

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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).



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

Page 4 of 4



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ŠKODA AUTO

- › 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.

