

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## ŠKODA Motorsport faces the challenge of the 10.000 corners at the Tour de Corse

- › Andreas Mikkelsen and Jan Kopecký head into battle in the FIA WRC2 tarmac classic with their ŠKODA R5
- › Around 320 kilometres of special stages through a veritable labyrinth of corners are a true test of man and machine
- › Three WRC rallies – three wins – ŠKODA heads for Corsica with a hat-trick
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “This is where total concentration counts”

**Mladá Boleslav, 4 April 2017** – After the icy mountain passes of the Rallye Monte Carlo, high-speed snow-covered tracks in Sweden and gravel trails through the mountains of Mexico, the world’s toughest tarmac rally, the Tour de Corse (6-9 April 2017), awaits the ŠKODA teams. The organisers call it the rally of the 10.000 corners – although nobody so far has actually counted them. In Corsica, the fight against the clock faces virtually no straights longer than 50 metres.

There are only ten timed special stages up for grabs in Corsica – but they’re all the tougher for their length. On Sunday, the penultimate test between Antisanti and Poggio di Nazza will put the drivers through their paces on a gruelling, non-stop sequence of corners over almost 54 kilometres. “This is where total concentration counts. Even the slightest error will be mercilessly punished,” says ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek, adding: “For the drivers, priority number one is to watch the tyres. If you attack it too aggressively, you pay the price with a dramatic loss of grip.”

Calendar changes mean that the Tour de Corse is once more taking place in spring, with temperamental April always likely to throw a few weather tantrums on Corsica. Rally veterans recall well that this time of year can bring sudden rain or hail showers that immediately transform the passes into treacherous ice rinks – yet another factor that makes sure the Tour de Corse is packed with thrills and excitement.

While the ŠKODA works teams of Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger and Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler have prepared for the special challenges of the Corsica rally with an extensive fitness programme, their racing machine, the ŠKODA FABIA R5, has also undergone a dedicated asphalt preparation. Shock absorbers and suspension have been modified to tarmac specifications and vehicle ride height was lowered as well.

Andreas Mikkelsen, who drove for the first time as a guest driver at the Rallye Monte Carlo and scored an impressive victory, is looking forward to his second appearance as a works driver on the French Mediterranean island: “I’m happy that ŠKODA is putting its faith in me again and allowing me to drive the ŠKODA FABIA R5 once more in Corsica.” Mikkelsen has demonstrated repeatedly in the past that he is one of the world’s fastest rally drivers on asphalt. In 2015 and 2016 he came in third overall at the Tour de Corse. The Norwegian celebrated his first overall win at the WRC in 2015 at the Rally de España, most of which is run on asphalt.

Jan Kopecký is likewise eager to get going on the Mediterranean island: I was second in the WRC in Corsica last year. And in 2013 and 2012, when the rally was part of the European Rally

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Championship, I came in second overall both times. I certainly wouldn't object to moving up one place," says the Czech driver with a grin. Ahead of Corsica, Kopecký treated himself to a special asphalt warm-up, scoring a dominant win at the first race in the Czech Rally Championship 2017, the Rallye Valaská.

The ŠKODA works team travels to the island with an immaculate hat-trick. With victories by Andreas Mikkelsen (Rallye Monte Carlo) and Pontus Tidemand (who won in Sweden and Mexico, but is taking a break from the Tour de Corse), every single winner so far has driven a ŠKODA FABIA R5. In Corsica, four ambitious ŠKODA private teams are competing alongside the two works teams. With a total of 22 entrants, the WRC2 field is strong in both quality and quantity.

## Did you already know that...

...from 1973 until 2008, the Tour de Corse was the French round of the World Rally Championship?  
...the Tour de Corse took place from 2009 until 2014 despite not having the WRC predicate?  
...in 2015, the Tour de Corse regained its ERC title and, alongside rally legends like the Rallye Monte Carlo, is one of the absolute classics in the WRC calendar?  
...countless stretches through villages and continuously changing asphalt surface conditions demand full driver concentration?  
...the longest stage of around 54 kilometres and the shortest special stage, the closing power stage over approx. 10 kilometres, both take place on the final day?  
...ŠKODA works driver, Pontus Tidemand, is leading the WRC2 classification after three races?  
...if he wins in Corsica, ŠKODA works driver Andreas Mikkelsen can draw level with his teammate?

## 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
<b>Rally France</b>	<b>06.04.–09.04.2017</b>
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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## Media images:



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## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

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.

2016 was one of the most successful years in the 116-year history of ŠKODA Motorsport. In the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker for the first time. In total, ten of the 2016 season's races in the World Rally Championship were won by a ŠKODA FABIA R5. ŠKODA drivers Gustavo Saba (PY) and Gaurav Gill (IND) also won the continental championships in South America and the Asia-Pacific region at the wheel of the successful ŠKODA FABIA R5. Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q) was unbeatable in the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), while a further ten national titles also went the way of ŠKODA drivers.

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. In 2017, works duos Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) and Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) will contest selected races in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Kopecký/Dresler will also compete in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), where they will be looking to claim a third title in a row.

## 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.