

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

Page 1 of 3



Rally Argentina: Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson controlling the lead in their ŠKODA FABIA R5

- › ŠKODA factory team scores WRC 2 win on every single stage during opening leg
- › Strongest competitor, ŠKODA privateer Hubert Ptaszek, went off the road, will restart
- › Pontus Tidemand stresses: “We must keep focussed to avoid any silly mistakes.”
- › ŠKODA Motorsport director Michal Hrabánek: “It’s still a long way to go.”

Villa Carlos Paz/Argentina, 29 April 2017 – Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5) currently have everything under control at Rally Argentina. The two Swedes were the fastest WRC 2 team on every single special stage on Friday, holding a dominant category lead of more than four and a half minutes. On Saturday, the longest day of the rally is waiting for the Swedish pairing.

After the spectacular and crowd-pleasing “super stage” in downtown Cordoba, the rally (based in the lakeside resort of Villa Carlos Paz 700 km north-west of Buenos Aires), headed on Friday to the south of Cordoba to the Santa Rosa Region for two loops of fast and sandy tracks. Having done the recce (where the teams check the stages and prepare their pace notes) in heavy rain and muddy conditions, on Friday the six stages were entirely dry. On some places even rocks came out of the ground, making the passage really tough for the rally cars.

Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) immediately found the right pace with their ŠKODA FABIA R5 and took the WRC 2 lead without taking any big risks. Only Hubert Ptaszek/Maciek Szczepaniak (POL/POL), running a private ŠKODA FABIA R5, were able to follow the speed of the factory team from Sweden. But in the fourth stage they went off the road and had to retire for the day. After repairing the car, the privateers from Poland plan to rejoin the rally on Saturday under Rally 2 regulations.

“I have to stay focussed. It’s all about finding the right speed and not to lose concentration. The ŠKODA FABIA R5 is simply perfect – it’s absolutely fun to drive, I had no problems at all. A big thanks to my team. But there is still a long, long way to go”, concludes Pontus Tidemand.

On Saturday the teams are heading north-west onto the challenging gravel roads of the Punilla Valley for the longest day of Rally Argentina. Again, the route features two identical loops with three stages each, covering 160 kilometres in total. The weather forecast expects hot and dry conditions.

Rally Argentina (WRC 2) after leg 1

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE) ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:31:27.7 h
2. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, + 4:30.7 min
3. Alonso/Mercadal (ARG/ARG), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 5:22.3 min
4. Saba Rodriguez/Mussano (PRY/ARG), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 37:18.5 min
5. Ptaszek/Szczepaniak (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 42:13.7 min
6. Guerra/Cué (MEX/ESP), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 43:01.4 min



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 2 of 3

Number of the day: 9

Fastest WRC 2 competitor on all nine stages of Rally Argentina: So far nobody could beat Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson and their ŠKODA FABIA R5 on the tough gravel roads.

Calendar FIA World Rally Championship 2017 (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 MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 3 of 3

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ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2017

So far fastest in WRC 2 on every stage of Rally Argentina: Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5)

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ŠKODA at Rally Argentina 2017

Leading the Rally Argentina from the start: Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson with their ŠKODA FABIA R5

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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 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 (PRY) 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 (QAT) 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 (SWE/SWE) and Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) 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.

