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WRC Spain: Kopecký fastest on tarmac, storms to second in WRC 2 – youngster Nordgren fourth

- › Czech Champion Jan Kopecký was unbeatable in WRC 2 on the tarmac stages at RallyRACC Catalunya, the Spanish round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
- › 2015 Finnish Junior Champion Juuso Nordgren with stunning debut at ŠKODA Motorsport finishing fourth in WRC 2 category in a factory entered ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “While Jan proved again to be one of the fastest drivers on tarmac. Juuso already paid back the trust that has been placed in him.”

Salou, 8 October 2017 – Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) won every single tarmac stage of RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de España, the Spanish round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). Driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 the reigning Czech Champions achieved 14 stage wins in a row, making up a time loss from the gravel stages and finally storming to second in WRC 2 category. On his debut for the factory team, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 for the very first time on tarmac stages, Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen (FIN/FIN) defended fourth position in WRC 2.

The final leg of the RallyRACC Catalunya – Rally de España was held over six special stages totalling 74 kilometres. The first test had to be done in the dark, and ŠKODA Motorsport's Jan Kopecký drove the fastest time in WRC 2 category, followed by his young Teammate Juuso Nordgren. The 2015 Finnish Junior champion drove the ŠKODA FABIA R5 on tarmac for the very first time adapting himself more and more to the fast roads in Spain. When the sun finally shone from the beautiful Catalan sky Kopecký continued to collect fastest times. In the end he had won every single tarmac stage of the rally, achieving 14 stage wins in a row – including a spectacular second fastest time on the Salou show stage ahead of a dozen more powerful WRC cars.

Without the time loss suffered on Friday, when he caught the car in front of him and had to complete the last part of the stage in his competitor's dust losing over one minute, the Czech Champion would have fought for victory. In total he won 14 out of 19 special stages. “I am still disappointed by the decision of the stewards not to give me any compensation for the time I lost without my fault. But that's life, I nevertheless enjoyed the rest of the rally. I think that I and Pavel could prove again, that the ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the fastest car of the WRC 2 category. We made no mistake and are happy with our performance,” concluded the multiple Czech Champion.

Their young teammates Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen defended fourth place during the final leg. Driving the factory team's ŠKODA FABIA R5 for the first time the two Finns showed an impressive performance especially on the tarmac stages. “I am happy with the rally and the progress I could make throughout the event. I have to thank the whole Team of ŠKODA Motorsport, that they put so much faith in me and gave me such a fantastic rally car,” commented a delighted Nordgren at the finish.



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Competing in RC2 class Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) were not registered to score points in WRC 2. Driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 entered by the private Printsport Team they nevertheless delivered a stunning performance, finishing third behind the factory car of Jan Kopecký. "I studied the inboard footage of Jan to learn from his driving style. He was incredibly fast and I know that I still have to learn a lot about tarmac," confessed the Norwegian rising star after his impressive performance. Veiby, who is still in the title fight in the FIA Asia Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) with MRF ŠKODA Team, will join the factory team of ŠKODA Motorsport alongside newly crowned WRC 2 Champion Pontus Tidemand and young Finn Juuso Nordgren for the upcoming Wales Rally GB (26 – 29 October).

"Jan proved that he is currently one of the fastest drivers on tarmac. Juuso already paid back the trust that has been placed in him", concluded ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek at the podium of the RallyRACC Catalunya – Rallye de España in Salou.

Final result RallyRACC Catalunya – Rallye de España (WRC 2)

1. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, 3:09:43.8 h.
2. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +31.8 sec.
3. Guerra/Cué (MEX/ESP), ŠKODA FABIA R5, + 4:38.9 min.
4. Nordgren/Suominen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +5:15.7 min.
5. Tempestini/Bernacchini (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3 R5, +5:17.8 min.
6. Pieniazek/Mazur (POL/POL), Peugeot 208 T16, +7:33.8 min.

Current standings WRC 2 after 11 of 13 rounds

1. Pontus Tidemand (SWE), ŠKODA, 133 points
2. Teemu Suninen (FIN), Ford, 85 points
3. Jan Kopecký (CZE), ŠKODA, 85 points
4. Eric Camilli (FRA), Ford, 77 points
5. Ole Christian Veiby (NOR), ŠKODA, 68 points

Number of the day: 14

On Saturday and Sunday ŠKODA Motorsport's Jan Kopecký was the fastest competitor in WRC 2 on 14 stages in a row. Nobody in WRC 2 could beat the reigning Czech Champion on the tarmac roads of Catalunya.



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

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rallye Monte Carlo	19/01–22/01/2017
Rally Sweden	09/02–12/02/2017
Rally Guanajuato México	09/03–12/03/2017
Tour de Corse – Rally France	06/04–09/04/2017
Rally Argentina	27/04–30/04/2017
Rally de Portugal	18/05–21/05/2017
Rally Italia Sardegna	08/06–11/06/2017
Rally Poland	29/06–02/07/2017
Rally Finland	27/07–30/07/2017
ADAC Rallye Deutschland	17/08–20/08/2017
RallyRACC Catalunya – Rallye de España	05/10–08/10/2017
Wales Rally GB	26/10–29/10/2017
Rally Australia	16/11–19/11/2017

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ŠKODA at RallyRACC Catalunya – Rallye de España

In WRC 2 Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (ŠKODA FABIA R5) won 14 stages and finished second in the WRC 2 category at RallyRACC Catalunya – Rallye de España

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally RACC Catalunya – Rallye de España

Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen achieved a well deserved fourth place in WRC 2 driving the first time a factory run ŠKODA FABIA R5 of ŠKODA Motorsport on tarmac stages

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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 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.

