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Rally Monte-Carlo: ŠKODA FABIA R5 driver Jan Kopecký clearly leads WRC 2 category

- › During the first two days of the season opener, Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler dominated WRC 2 category driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 carrying the tricolour of the Czech flag
- › With Kopecký followed by young teammates Ole Christian Veiby and Kalle Rovanperä the ŠKODA works drivers hold all top three positions in RC 2 class
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “A great performance from Jan under difficult conditions. O.C. and Kalle also impressed me with fast and smart drives.”

Monte-Carlo/Gap, 26 January 2018 – Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler convincingly dominate WRC 2 category and RC 2 class at Rally Monte-Carlo, season opener of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). Their ŠKODA FABIA R5 is carrying the tricolour of the Czech flag, paying tribute to the 100th birthday of the founding date of Czechoslovakia. Behind the Czech Champions, their young teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) and Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) proved their speed as well. Strategically not nominated to score championship points for WRC 2 classification, they are holding second and third position in the highly competitive RC 2 class after the rally's second day.

Rally Monte-Carlo started on Thursday evening in front of the Principality's glamorous Casino. As the crews headed to the French mountain area around Gap, the longest stage, the 36 kms of “Sisteron”, was waiting for them. Tyre choice was like a game of roulette. 95 per cent of the stage were entirely dry, but some stretches in the forest on the summit had plenty of ice and snow. While a lot of teams struggled with the difficult road conditions, the three ŠKODA factory crews had more or less trouble free runs. “The stage was quite difficult. I was very, very cautious on the ice and in the dirty sections”, confessed Jan Kopecký. The Czech Rally Champion, as usual navigated by Pavel Dresler, held second position in the WRC 2 category at the overnight rest halt in Gap.

For this event their young teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) and Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) are not nominated to score championship points for WRC 2 classification, taking away the pressure of having to finish. Nevertheless they did very well in the opening two stages. O.C. Veiby was third fastest in the “Sisteron” stage, although he had to overtake two competitors, finishing the day in fourth spot in RC 2 class. 17 years old Kalle Rovanperä, being the youngest driver in this year's Rally Monte-Carlo, meanwhile occupied the sixth position after a faultless and fast drive.

On Friday morning again the roads were mostly dry. Jan Kopecký immediately stormed into the lead of the WRC 2 category. “Today the feeling was much better than yesterday night. At least we could see the road today. My tyre choice was good, my ŠKODA FABIA R5 was really fantastic,” commented a relaxed Kopecký. In their attempt to follow the flying Czech, Ford drivers Teemu Suninen and Eric Camilli left the road and are out of the rally. From now on, for Kopecký it was all about controlling his pace. After the midday service break, rain made the stages even trickier. “It started to rain shortly before the start of the sixth stage. When I saw that Camilli had stopped, I slowed down”, he said. Despite of what Kopecký called “slowing down”, he was the fastest WRC 2



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driver in this stage. At the end of the second day of the rally, he is holding a huge category lead, also leading the RC 2 class.

ŠKODA juniors Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen and Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen continued their learning process and drove a string of fast times. While their main competitors went off the road, O.C. Veiby with a fast and controlled ride conquered the second place in the RC 2 class at the end of the day, followed by Kalle Rovanperä. The young Finn survived a big moment when he nearly spun off the road. "We are here to learn, I am totally happy about my current position", confessed Veiby. Shooting star Kalle Rovanperä emphasized: "This is a really challenging event, but I enjoy it very much!"

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was delighted at the end of the second day in Gap: "A great performance from Jan under difficult conditions, he had everything under control. O.C. and Kalle impressed me with a fast and smart drive. But there is still a long way to go!" The third day of Rally Monte-Carlo on Saturday features five more stages covering roughly 118 kms, before the crews return to Monte-Carlo. On Sunday (28 January) four more stages are on the program, among them two runs over the famous Col de Turini.

Current Standings Rally Monte-Carlo after Day 2 (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 2:15:27.2 h.
2. De Mevius/Louka (BEL/BEL), Peugeot 208, +8:28.7 min.
3. Abbring/Tsjoen (NDL/BEL), Ford Fiesta R5, +8:59.5 min.
4. Scießere/Zanella (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3, +12:35.8 min.

Number of the day: 3

At Rally Monte Carlo the three ŠKODA factory crews are conquering all top three positions in the highly competitive R2 class.



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The 2018 calendar of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	25/01–28/01/2018
Sweden	15/02–18/02/2018
Mexico	08/03–11/03/2018
France	05/04–08/04/2018
Argentina	26/04–29/04/2018
Portugal	17/05–20/05/2018
Italy	07/06–10/06/2018
Finland	26/07–29/07/2018
Germany	16/08–19/08/2018
Turkey	13/09–16/09/2018
Great Britain	04/10–07/10/2018
Spain	25/10–28/10/2018
Australia	15/11–18/11/2018

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ŠKODA at Rally Monte-Carlo 2018

After two days Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 carrying the tricolour of the Czech flag, are leading WRC 2 category and RC2 class.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Monte-Carlo 2018

ŠKODA FABIA R5 crews occupy all top three positions in RC2 class at the opening round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018, the Rally Monte-Carlo.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





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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.

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 the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) 2016, Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker. 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.

2017 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) became WRC 2 Champions, ŠKODA Motorsport won the Team Championship. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) won the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the third time in a row and are the spearhead of in total 14 crews winning their country's national titles. Furthermore the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC) have been won by teams competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

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.

