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Page 1 of 4



Rally Monte-Carlo: ŠKODA FABIA R5 driver Jan Kopecký still in control in WRC 2 category

- › ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler continue to increase their lead in WRC 2 category at the opening round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC)
- › While ŠKODA junior Ole Christian Veiby hit a barrier and had to retire, Kalle Rovanperä holds the second position in RC 2 class after a faultless drive with his ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "I feel sorry for O.C., who had to stop. Jan was in a class of his own. Kalle was fast and smart under really difficult conditions."

Monte-Carlo/Gap, 27 January 2018 – Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler continued to build up their impressive lead in WRC 2 category and RC 2 class at Rally Monte-Carlo. During the third day of the season opener of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) the Czech duo powered their ŠKODA FABIA R5 to a twelve minutes lead. While ŠKODA junior Ole Christian Veiby hit a steel barrier and had to retire, teammate Kalle Rovanperä is trailing Kopecký, holding second position in RC 2 class after a faultless drive with his ŠKODA FABIA R5. Both ŠKODA works drivers aim to bring this fantastic result to the finish on Sunday next to the harbour of Monte-Carlo.

After the mixed conditions on Friday with dry roads in the morning and rain in the afternoon, the Rally Monte-Carlo on Saturday changed its face again. On the mountain roads in the north of Gap the rain turned into snow. All crews opted for studded winter tyres. Five stages had to be driven before the rally returned to Monte-Carlo.

ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler started the third day of Rally Monte-Carlo leading the WRC 2 category by eight and a half minutes, being first in RC 2 class as well. Their challenge from then on was to stay focused and to avoid any mistakes. In the opening, snow packed section of the ninth stage, the Czech Champion had a so called big moment. Shaken, but not stirred, he continued conservatively to the stage finish. "On the slushy snow, sometimes you feel like a passenger in your own car. The car was just sliding, this was really a scary moment. After that, I drove really, really cautious," admitted the Czech Champion.

His young ŠKODA teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) had two spins and suffered a puncture, but for the time being kept second place in RC 2 class. "I think I slightly bent the rear suspension, because after that, the handling of my car was a bit strange," commented Veiby. The youngest driver of the event, 17 years old ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä, and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) enjoyed driving on the snow and set a remarkable third fastest time in the class. "Without a spin, which cost me around ten seconds, I could have set the fastest time," said Rovanperä, who closed the gap to Veiby to 38 seconds.

In Saturday afternoon, the sun came out. But due to the snow on the longest stage of the day, the crews opted for studded winter tyres again. On stage 11, O.C. Veiby ran out of luck. After hitting the scenery with the rear and the front end of his ŠKODA FABIA R5, he was out of the rally.

Meanwhile Rovanperä set another second fastest time ahead of Jan Kopecký, who was totally focused to avoid any risks. At the end of the third day of the rally, Kopecký is leading the WRC 2



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 2 of 4

category by more than twelve minutes and is in front of the RC 2 class by nearly four minutes ahead of Kalle Rovanperä, who for Rally Monte-Carlo is nominated to score championship points thus not competing in WRC 2 category.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek had mixed emotions at the finish of the third day of Rally Monte Carlo: "I feel sorry for O.C., that after his accident he could not continue to build up more experience at this difficult rally. Jan was in a class of his own, tomorrow he has to stay on the road and bring this fantastic result home. Kalle showed his speed and cleverness under these very difficult conditions," he said. On Sunday (28 January) four more stages are on the menu, among them two runs over the famous Col de Turini.

Current Standings Rally Monte-Carlo after Day 3 (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:44:35.3 h.
2. De Mevius/Louka (BEL/BEL), Peugeot 208, +12:12.0 min.
3. Scießere/Zanella (ITA/ITA), Citroën DS3, +17:06.0 min.
4. Sunninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5, +33:57.9 min.

Number of the day: 12:12

At Rally Monte-Carlo, Jan Kopecký is leading in the WRC 2 category by an impressive 12:12 minutes!



ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 3 of 4

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

On the third day of the Rally Monte-Carlo, Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 carrying the tricolour of the Czech flag, increased their massive lead in WRC 2 category and RC 2 class

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Monte-Carlo 2018

The combination Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and ŠKODA FABIA R5 is dominating both WRC 2 category and RC 2 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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Page 4 of 4

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.

