

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Rally Mexico: ŠKODA Motorsport's Pontus Tidemand dominates WRC 2 category

- › After day two of Rally Mexico reigning WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson clearly lead the WRC 2 category with their ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › Teammates Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen had to retire after they hit a stone, will re-start under Rally 2 regulations with the goal to collect valuable championship points
- › Pontus Tidemand, at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA R5, won all of ten special stages
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Pontus is driving like a true champion. I feel sorry for Kalle, but he can re-start for valuable experience and championship points."

León/Mexico, 9 March 2018 – Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) so far are unbeatable on the tough and demanding gravel roads of Rally Guanajuato Mexico. During the first two days of the third round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), the ŠKODA FABIA R5 crew won all ten stages and clearly dominate the WRC 2 category by a margin of 3:07 minutes, at the same time conquering 8<sup>th</sup> place overall. Their young teammates Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) hit a stone after a jump on the second special stage and had to retire their ŠKODA FABIA R5 with a broken radiator. Luckily the ŠKODA Motorsport mechanics succeeded in repairing the car. So the youngest driver of the event will be able to re-start the third day of the rally under Rally 2 regulations.

Both ŠKODA factory crews started well into Rally Mexico. Already on Thursday's show stage in the streets of Guanajuato, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Pontus Tidemand set the fastest time, followed by his 17 years old teammate Kalle Rovanperä. While Tidemand drove the fastest time on the opening gravel special stage on Friday morning as well, everything went wrong for the young Finn. "After a jump there was a big rock in the middle of the road. Unfortunately, I couldn't avoid to hit it, and the stone broke the radiator," Rovanperä explained. His ŠKODA FABIA R5 was brought back to the service park in León where it was repaired by the ŠKODA mechanics. So Rovanperä, like some other WRC 2 competitors, will re-start for the third day of the rally.

In the meantime, Pontus Tidemand continued to set fastest times with a controlled and faultless drive. "No dramas. Very nice stages, a bit slippery, but the car feels good. I really enjoyed the day," he commented. At the end of the second day, the WRC 2 champion was leading the category by 3:07 minutes. ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was happy with this performance: "Pontus is driving like a true champion, so far he has everything under control. I feel sorry for Kalle. It is really a shame that he could not drive the Friday stages to gain more valuable experience. But luckily, he can re-start on Saturday and hopefully collect even some WRC 2 championship points."

On Saturday and Sunday (10/11 March), Rally Mexico features twelve more stages covering additional 186.81 kilometres, including the Powerstage "Las Minas", before the winner will be on the podium on Sunday at 14h30 (local time). Rally Guanajuato Mexico is based in León, the country's fifth largest city some 400 kms north-west of Mexico City.



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## Standings Rally Mexico after Day 2 (WRC 2)

1. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:53.01.0 h
2. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +3:07.4 min.
3. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +7:28.2 min.
4. Bulacia Wilkinson/Mussano (BOL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +7:35.9 min.

## Number of the day: 10

ŠKODA works driver Pontus Tidemand won all ten special stages of Rally Mexico on Thursday and Friday.

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

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	24/01–28/01/2018
Sweden	15/02–18/02/2018
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>08/03–11/03/2018</b>
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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## Media images:



### ŠKODA at Rally Mexico 2018

During the first two days, Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, set all fastest times of WRC 2, leading the category with a comfortable margin

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at Rally Mexico 2018

Kalle Rovannerä (right) and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) had to retire their ŠKODA FABIA R5 after hitting a stone. They will re-start the third round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) on day three

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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.

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, KAROQ, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- › in 2017 delivered more than 1,2 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, Algeria 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.

