

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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Czech Champion Kopecký and ŠKODA Motorsport lead WRC 2 at Rally France – teammate Veiby third

- › After day one Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler top the WRC 2 standings with their ŠKODA FABIA R5 at the fourth round of the FIA World Rally Championship in Corsica
- › ŠKODA teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen finish leg one in third position in WRC 2 category
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "I am happy, our updated ŠKODA FABIA R5 was reliable and fast like our drivers. Jan and O.C. performed well on this tough event."

Bastia, 6 April 2018 – ŠKODA factory team Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) took the lead in the WRC 2 category at Rally France/Tour de Corse after the first special stage and defended it up to the finish of leg one in Bastia. At the fourth round of the FIA World Rally Championship, their young Norwegian teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) lost some time with two spins, but nevertheless defended third position.

On the opening stage of the Rally France on Friday, the crews had to face nearly 50 kilometres with endless corners and virtually no straights between La Porta and Valle de Rostino in the northeast of Corsica. Heavy rainfall on Wednesday before the rally had put all kinds of dirt on the tarmac roads and in some corners water puddles made the road conditions unpredictable. "The first stage was very good for us, but it was very tricky as well. There was some running water on the road, which has not been there when we made our pace notes. As we are not allowed to have gravel crews, who check the roads before we are driving, the roads are a bit unpredictable in some corners. So I took a cautious approach," confessed Jan Kopecký. The ŠKODA factory driver was nevertheless fastest on the opening special stage, which put him into the lead after the morning loop.

While their competitors had technical issues or went off the road, both ŠKODA works teams were happy with their ŠKODA FABIA R5, which were reliable as always. "I had a spin in a hairpin in the first stage. On some places there is a lot of mud and water, the grip changes all the time. So I decided to be careful," said young Ole Christian Veiby, who was in third position of the WRC 2 category.

After the service at midday, the afternoon saw the repetition of the two morning stages. Jan Kopecký set another fastest time with his ŠKODA FABIA R5, increased his lead and after the four Friday stages was quite happy with his performance: "It was much better this afternoon, the roads were drier and I could push a lot more." Teammate O.C. Veiby had another spin, but could nevertheless defend his third position after the first leg on Friday.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was satisfied with the first day of Rally France: "This is really a tough test for men and machine on winding asphalt roads. I am happy, that our updated ŠKODA FABIA R5 was reliable and fast like our drivers. Jan proved again his pure speed on tarmac, and O.C. is learning with every kilometre here in Corsica," said Hrabánek.

Saturday will feature the longest leg of the rally. The crews have to face six special stages covering more than 136 kilometres.



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Standings Rally Corsica after Day 1 (WRC 2)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:24:07.0 h
2. Bonato/Boulloud, (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +20.8 sec.
3. Veiby/ Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:07.9 min.
4. Lefebvre/Moreau, (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +1:10.4 min.
5. Loubet/Landais (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20, +1:17.3 min.
6. Andolfi/Scattolin (ITA/ITA), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:25.7 min.

Number of the day: 49

The very first stage of Rally France on Friday morning was the more than 49 long kilometres test between La Porta and Valle de Rostino. ŠKODA works driver Jan Kopecký set the fastest time in WRC 2 category.

The calendar of the 2018 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
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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Media images:



ŠKODA at the Rally France/Tour de Corse 2018

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE), competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5, are leading in the WRC 2 category at Rally France/Tour de Corse after day one

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally France/Tour de Corse 2018

After leg one of the Rally France/Tour de Corse 2018, Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjærmoen (NOR/NOR) are third in the WRC 2 category

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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 35,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

