

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Rally Portugal: ŠKODA drivers Pontus Tidemand and Juuso Nordgren delayed by punctures

- › With their ŠKODA FABIA R5 collecting two punctures last year's winners and WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand /Jonas Andersson dropped to fifth in WRC 2 category
- › ŠKODA Junior Team Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen suffered two punctures as well and are currently in ninth place on the WRC 2 leader board
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Pontus and Juuso had really bad luck, but valuable championship points are still in reach."

**Matosinhos, 18 Mai 2018 – Reigning WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) suffered two punctures with their ŠKODA FABIA R5 during the Friday leg of Rally Portugal (17/05–20/05/2018), sixth round of the FIA World Rally Championship. Currently they are in the fifth position in WRC 2 category but can still earn valuable championship points. Their young teammates Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen (FIN/FIN) encountered the same mishap, at the end of the Friday leg they are ninth in the WRC 2 category standings.**

The ŠKODA factory crews Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson and Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen started well into the Rally Portugal, the sixth round of FIA World Rally Championship. The two ŠKODA FABIA R5 ex aequo scored the fastest time on the opening show stage, cheered by tens of thousands of enthusiastic rally fans on the rally cross circuit of Lousada.

But on Friday morning, disaster hit both ŠKODA crews. "I don't know how it happened. I got a puncture 15 kms into the stage, although the road seemed to be relatively smooth. Obviously, that doesn't help when you have a puncture", commented Pontus Tidemand. His young teammate Juuso Nordgren showed some promising split times, until he suffered a puncture as well. "There are stones in places, sometimes it's like a lottery. If you hit one, you get a puncture easily", Nordgren said. As a consequence, both ŠKODA crews lost nearly one and a half minute and dropped down the leader board.

Pontus Tidemand had to face a special challenge. Because he had decided to take only one spare wheel into the car in order to save weight, another puncture on the remaining two morning stages, totalling more than 45 kilometres of tough gravel tracks, would have put him out of the rally. Therefore, the WRC 2 Champion from Sweden drove the next stage especially carefully. But on the last stage before the midday service, he set a dominant fastest time, followed by teammate Nordgren.

The repetition of the morning leg saw both ŠKODA crews fighting back through the WRC 2 field. Tidemand set another fastest time on the fifth stage and moved back into fourth position. Finnish junior Juuso Nordgren followed in the footsteps of his teammate and conquered fifth position in the second works ŠKODA FABIA R5. But one stage later, both ŠKODA crews again suffered punctures. Tidemand dropped to fifth in WRC 2, while Nordgren finished the day in ninth position of the category.





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"This is really bad luck, but it is not over and there is still a long way to go. Pontus and Juuso can still fight for valuable championship points. So far this year's Rally Portugal is the toughest event of the 2018 season, many of our competitors suffered as well", commented ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek.

Like in 2017, Rally Portugal offers the longest leg on Saturday (19 May), running over nearly 155 kilometres divided into six special stages with a mixture of sandy roads, rocks and deep ruts during the second pass of the stages. On Sunday (20 May), the spectacular Fafe loop with five stages on fast and smooth gravel roads, including the famous jump, is the spectator highlight of the event. In total, the teams will face 20 special stages of 358.19 kilometres, before the winner will reach the podium on Sunday at 15h45 in Matosinhos close to the city of Porto.

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

1. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, 1:44:27.8 h
2. Pieniasek/Mazur (POL/POL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +34.3 sec.
3. Lefebvre/Moreau (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +34.8 sec.
4. Heller/Olmos (CHL/ARG), Ford Fiesta R5, +1:28.4 min
5. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:44.6 min

Number of the day: 4

Four punctures (two for each crew) delayed the ŠKODA works crews Tidemand/Andersson and Nordgren/Suominen during a tough Friday leg of Rally Portugal.

## 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
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>17/05–20/05/2018</b>
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 Portugal 2018

Reigning WRC 2 Champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE), driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, suffered two punctures and finished day two in fifth position of the WRC 2 category

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at Rally Portugal 2018

Finnish ŠKODA juniors Juuso Nordgren and Tapio Suominen were delayed by punctures and are in the ninth position after the Friday leg

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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, 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.

