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Wales Rally GB: Champion Tidemand competing for WRC 2 victory with ŠKODA junior Rovannerä

- › ŠKODA works crews Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson and Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen among favourites for WRC 2 category win at championship's 11th round
- › Reigning WRC 2 champion Pontus Tidemand is highly motivated to repeat his 2017 victory in Wales
- › ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä celebrates 18th birthday three days before the start
- › ŠKODA Motorsport prematurely clinched the FIA WRC 2 Championship for Teams for the fourth time in a row
- › ŠKODA crews so far won nine out of ten rallies of the WRC 2 championship 2018

Mladá Boleslav, 27 September 2018 – Reigning WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) from ŠKODA are highly motivated to repeat their last year's victory at Wales Rally GB (4/10–7/10/2018). While championship leader Jan Kopecký won the recent WRC 2 round in Turkey, Pontus Tidemand, the runner-up from Sweden, had to retire, trailing his teammate now significantly in the overall standings. ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) compete for the second time in Wales and aim for a top result, too.

At the recent Rally Turkey Marmaris, reigning WRC 2 champion Pontus Tidemand and Czech Rally Champion Jan Kopecký for the first time during the 2018 season were in a direct fight for WRC 2 honours. While Kopecký scored season win number five, Tidemand had to retire. Nevertheless, ŠKODA Motorsport prematurely for the fourth time in a row won the FIA WRC 2 Championship for Teams (*subject to official publication of the results by the FIA*).

Right from the season's start ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek granted the same number of WRC 2 events to both works drivers. Accordingly Tidemand will do his sixth WRC 2 rally in Wales, while Kopecký will have his start number six in three weeks in Spain. Pontus Tidemand is highly motivated to repeat last year's victory in Great Britain. In 2017, he was unbeatable in the Welsh forests. Heavy fog and rain could not stop the eventual WRC 2 champion from setting impressive fastest times and winning the WRC 2 category.

One of his toughest rivals at the officially called Wales Rally GB will be ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä. Three days before the start, he will celebrate his 18th birthday. Having received his Finnish driver licence by special permission exactly one year ago, during the last twelve months he could compete only in certain countries. Still he impressed with a string of fastest times, for example leading Rally Finland before a mishap made him drop to fourth place. At Rallye Deutschland he delivered another strong performance by finishing second in the WRC 2 classification. Actually Wales Rally GB is the first round of the FIA Wold Rally Championship, the young Finn competes in for a second time. And while teenagers at this age normally enjoy their first rides with a brand new driver licence, Kalle Rovannerä is one of the top favourites in the WRC 2 category at Wales Rally GB.

Wales Rally GB gets on its way on Thursday (4 October) at 19h00 with a 1.70 kilometres long show stage on the horse race track of Tir Prince. On Friday (5 October) the crews are facing eight stages



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totalling 110.76 kilometres. The most challenging and longest day of the rally with nine stages and 150.24 kilometres will be Saturday (6 October). The final leg on Sunday (7 October) features five more stages covering 55.64 kilometres. The winner will reach the podium at the village of Llandudno at around 13h15 (all times local).

Did you know...

...that in 1932 an impressive number of 341 competitors were starting the first "Royal Automobile Club Rally"?

...that in 1960 the RAC Rally, as it was known by then, for first time used special stages in the commercial forests of Wales, the Lake District and the notorious Kielder Forest?

...that in 1990 for the first time pre-rally inspection of the special stages – commonly known as "recce" – and pace notes were allowed? Before 1990 all stages had to be driven with rough information only, the co-driver relying on nothing than a detailed road map.

...that in the past the RAC Rally was a tough marathon test? In 1983 for example the rally covered 3,046 kilometres with 58 special stages totalling 844 kilometres. The total stage time of winner Stig Blomqvist (Audi Quattro) summed up to 8 hours, 50 minutes and 28 seconds. Ladislav Křeček/Bořivoj Motl won the A5 class with a factory entered ŠKODA 120 LS finishing 25th overall.

...that up to the year 2000 the British round of the FIA World Rally Championship took place in England, Scotland and Wales before it entirely moved to Wales?

...the all tarmac stage "Great Orme Llandudno" will return to the event? It consists of a twisting asphalt road and finishes on the beachside promenade of Llandudno not far from the podium.

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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ŠKODA at Wales Rally GB 2018

Reigning WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5) want to repeat their last year's WRC 2 victory at the upcoming Rally Wales GB

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Wales Rally GB 2018

ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovanperä wants to celebrate his 18th birthday together with co-driver Jonne Halttunen with a top result at Wales Rally GB

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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. In 2018 Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) managed to win the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the fourth consecutive time.

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- › 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.