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Wales Rally GB: ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä wins WRC 2 ahead of teammate Pontus Tidemand

- › Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, achieved a start-to-finish victory in the WRC 2 category at the eleventh round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › With second place reigning WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand and co-driver Jonas Andersson secured the season's third double victory in WRC 2 for ŠKODA Motorsport
- › So far ŠKODA crews scored ten WRC 2 victories out of eleven rounds of the FIA World Rally Championship 2018

Deeside, 7 October 2018 – ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) achieved a start-to-finish victory in the WRC 2 category at Wales Rally GB, the eleventh round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship. With second place, teammates Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (SWE/SWE) secured the season's third double victory in the WRC 2 category for ŠKODA Motorsport. After the recent Rally Turkey, the Czech Brand had already prematurely won the WRC 2 Championship for Teams, for the fourth time in a row (subject to official publication of the results by the FIA). The 2018 WRC 2 Championship for Drivers will be decided between ŠKODA's overall leader Jan Kopecký, who as planned did not compete in Wales, and teammate Pontus Tidemand.

Having celebrated his 18th birthday during Monday's pre-event test in Wales, ŠKODA youngster Kalle Rovannerä took the WRC 2 lead already on Thursday during the first special stage of Wales Rally GB and defended it until the finish line in Llandudno at the coastline of the Atlantic. He set the foundation of his dominant category victory during the Friday leg, increasing the lead over teammate Pontus Tidemand finally to more than one minute. The young Finn set in total 15 fastest WRC 2 times on the 23 stages of Wales Rally GB, his victory was never in danger throughout the event. Having already won the WRC 2 category at Rally Australia 2017 (where, however, he was the only competitor in the category), this time he defeated a strong WRC 2 field, including reigning WRC 2 champion Pontus Tidemand.

Together with co-driver Jonne Halttunen, Rovannerä controlled the WRC 2 lead during the remaining two days of Rally Wales GB with a faultless and fast ride. Pontus Tidemand and Jonas Andersson secured second position and valuable points for the WRC 2 Championship, which brought them closer to the category overall leaders, teammates Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler. As Wales Rally GB is not part of his six events campaign, the Czech duo did not compete in the UK.

The final leg on Sunday brought five more stages covering 55.64 kilometres. The eight kilometres of "Great Orme Llandudno" featured a spectacular winding tarmac road along the coastline of the Atlantic. Kalle Rovannerä set his 14th fastest WRC 2 time at the beginning of the day and confessed: "I am avoiding risks, but I keep my speed in order not to lose concentration." With a steady drive teammate Pontus Tidemand maintained second position in the category standings. On the next stage, Rovannerä was again quickest, while Tidemand slightly damaged the right rear side of his ŠKODA FABIA R5, which nevertheless proved again to be a rock solid car. For safety reasons, Tidemand and co-driver Andersson changed the rear wishbone with the spare they carried on board their rally car.

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On the remaining three stages, which included two runs over the tarmac stage close to Llandudno, Kalle Rovander and Jonne Halttunen crowned their fantastic performance by winning the WRC 2 category at Wales Rally GB more than one and a half minutes ahead of teammates and WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson.

At the finish line of Wales Rally GB, ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek was more than happy: "Kalle and Jonne did a really fantastic job. They were not only fast, but they also managed to handle the pressure. Under the most difficult road conditions, they brought home their more than deserved victory. Thanks to another great performance, Pontus and Jonas gave the team the third double victory in the WRC 2 category of the 2018 season. I would like to thank the whole team for this great success."

Final Results Wales Rally GB (WRC 2)

1. Rovander/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:15:27.2 h
2. Tidemand/Andersson (SWE/SWE), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:34.2 min.
3. Greensmith/Gelsomino (GBR/ITA), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:13.6 min.
4. Huttunen/Linnaketo (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20 R5, +2:56.8 min.
5. Lefebvre/Moreau (FRA/FRA), Citroën C3 R5, +4:35.4 min.

Current championship standings WRC 2 (after 11 of 13 rounds)

1. Jan Kopecký (CZE) ŠKODA, 125 points
2. Pontus Tidemand (SWE), ŠKODA, 111 points
3. Gus Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 70 points
4. Kalle Rovander (FIN), ŠKODA, 65 points

Number of the day: 3

At Wales Rally GB, ŠKODA Motorsport celebrated the third double victory in the WRC 2 category during the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship.

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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

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5, Finnish ŠKODA youngsters Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen achieved a dominant WRC 2 victory in Wales

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Wales Rally GB 2018

With second place, reigning WRC 2 champions Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (ŠKODA FABIA R5) secured a double win for ŠKODA in the WRC 2 category

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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.

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.