

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



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## Rally Sweden: ŠKODA Motorsport's Kalle Rovannerä fought back to second in WRC 2 Pro

- › After losing some time in a snowbank, Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) moved up to second in WRC 2 Pro category again
- › Finnish Champion Eerik Pietarinen and co-driver Juhana Raitanen as well encountered bad luck, but are still in competition
- › Rovannerä set five fastest WRC 2 Pro times on the seven stages of the Friday leg

**Torsby, 15 February 2019 – At Rally Sweden (14/02–17/02/2019), second round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship, Finnish ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen recovered from an off road-excursion with their ŠKODA FABIA R5 and moved up to second position again in the interim classification of WRC 2 Pro category. Their compatriots Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen were hit by bad luck on Friday morning as well, but proved their talent with a string of quick stage times during the afternoon leg.**

As a tradition, a short stage on the spectacular trotting horse race track in Karlstad was opener for Rally Sweden, second round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship, on Thursday evening. Eerik Pietarinen, nominated by ŠKODA Motorsport to score points for the new WRC 2 Pro category, set the first fastest time which gave him and co-driver Juhana Raitanen the category lead before the overnight rest halt. ŠKODA works driver Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen set the third quickest time on the stage, which was covered with melting snow and deep ruts.

On Friday morning, the crews were heading for the fast and winding forest roads of Norway. Rovannerä was quickest out of the box and took the lead despite confessing he needs more confidence in the setup of his ŠKODA FABIA R5. One stage later, the young Finn totally lost his confidence plus control over his car, spun into a snow bank and needed the help of spectators to get back on track. He was 2:22 minutes down on the fastest time of the WRC 2 Pro category. "I don't like to drive like I do at the moment. My mistake – that's it," he commented. Disaster hit Eerik Pietarinen even worse, he went into a snowbank, got back on the road again – but rolled in the last corner of the third special stage. While Rovannerä recovered into a fast rhythm and equal with Citroën driver Mads Østberg set the fastest time in the WRC 2 Pro category, Pietarinen managed to get through the stage without windscreen and made it to the midday service halt in Torsby.

After the service halt, the crews faced the repetition of the three morning stages plus one special stage close to the service park in Torsby. "Now we start from the beginning again," Kalle Rovannerä looked back on his unlucky Friday morning and started a race to catch up with his ŠKODA FABIA R5. Rising temperatures converted the snow into gravel tracks, and Rovannerä eventually set five fastest WRC 2 Pro times on the seven stages of the rally's Friday leg.

"My driving was much better in the afternoon, but these conditions are really hard. I never drove with studded tires on roads like this with so much gravel, it is really hard to find the right balance", he said at the end of the day.

At Rally Sweden, the crews are facing 19 special stages, covering in total nearly 320 kilometres on the remote forest tracks of Sweden and Norway. The rally finishes on Sunday (17 February) with

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the final Power Stage close to the service park in Torsby, the winners are expected on the podium around 13h00.

## Standings Rally Sweden after Day 2 (WRC 2 Pro)

1. Østberg/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), Citroën C3 R5, 1:14:30.6 h
2. Rovaniemi/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +1:30.9 min.
3. Greensmith/Edmondson (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:37.8 min.
4. Pietarinen/Raitanen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +5:36.5 min.
5. Pieniazek/Heller (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +51:12.3 min.

Number of the day: 29

29 crews using a R5 car – amongst them 16 ŠKODA FABIA R5 – started Rally Sweden, which clearly proves the success of this category.

## The calendar of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2 Pro)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	24/01–27/01/2019
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>14/02–17/02/2019</b>
Mexico	07/03–10/03/2019
France	28/03–31/03/2019
Argentina	25/04–28/04/2019
Chile	09/05–12/05/2019
Portugal	30/05–02/06/2019
Italy	13/06–16/06/2019
Finland	01/08–04/08/2019
Germany	22/08–25/08/2019
Turkey	12/09–15/09/2019
Great Britain	03/10–06/10/2019
Spain	24/10–27/10/2019
Australia	14/11–17/11/2019

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### ŠKODA at Rally Sweden

Kalle Rovander and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) are second in the WRC 2 Pro category after the second day of Rally Sweden

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at Rally Sweden

Eerik Pietarinen and co-driver Juhana Raitanen, nominated by ŠKODA Motorsport for WRC 2 Pro at Rally Sweden, are currently fourth in the category

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

2018 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport so far. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) became WRC 2 champions and managed to win the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the fourth consecutive time. 2017 WRC 2 winners Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson finished second overall, and youngsters Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) completed a pure ŠKODA podium in the final standings of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 category. For the fourth time in a row ŠKODA Motorsport won the WRC 2 Championship for Teams.

The success story of the Czech brand took place worldwide. The private ŠKODA driver Yuya Sumiyama and navigator Takahiro Yasui from Japan won the 2018 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), Manvir Singh Baryan/Drew Sturrock (KEN/GBR) took the title win in the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC). After winning the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) in 2013, 2016 and 2017, ŠKODA crew Gustavo Saba/Fernando Mussano (PRY/ARG) again were successful. On top of that, ŠKODA crews won 17 national championships.

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.

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.

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › was founded during the pioneering days of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established automobile companies in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ, as well as the KAMIQ and the SUPERB.
- › delivered more than 1.25 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2018.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs over 35,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.