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Page 1 of 4



Rally France/Tour de Corse: Private ŠKODA crews secure double victory in WRC 2 category

- › Driving private ŠKODA FABIA R5's, Fabio Andolfi and Nikolay Gryazin finished first and second in WRC 2 category at the French round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › Works crew Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen had to retire in after an accident with their privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Congratulations to Fabio Andolfi and Nikolay Gryazin, both again demonstrated the competitiveness of our ŠKODA FABIA R5."

Mladá Boleslav, 31 March 2019 – Mixed emotions for ŠKODA Motorsport after the fourth round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship, Rally France/Tour de Corse (28/03–31/03/2019). While ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN), driving a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5, had to retire from leading the WRC 2 Pro category after an accident, two private crews secured a double win for ŠKODA in the WRC 2 category. In the penultimate stage on Sunday, Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov (RUS/RUS) took the WRC 2 lead from Fabio Andolfi/Simone Scattolin (ITA/ITA). But during the final test, the Italian crew fought back and secured the well deserved victory.

During the opening leg on Friday morning, ŠKODA factory driver Kalle Rovanperä struggled with understeering in his privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5. But the young Finn managed to complete the first three stages with a faultless drive. His main rival in the WRC 2 Pro category, Lukasz Pieniazek, collected a puncture during the first stage of the day. So despite his problems, Rovanperä was already clearly leading the category. After the first three stages of the day, no service was allowed. Nevertheless, Kalle Rovanperä and his co-driver Jonne Halttunen proved their talent as skilful car mechanics and modified the setup of their ŠKODA FABIA R5. For the repetition of the morning stages, their performance was improving and they defended the lead in the WRC 2 Pro category, at the same time moving up to ninth position among all R5 crews.

On Saturday, the Finnish pairing made even more progress. But during the longest test of the rally, the more than 47 Kilometres long "Castagniccia" stage, they ran out of luck. "In the middle part of the stage, there was some dirt on the road. We made a small mistake, went a little wide and hit a rock. The car was not looking too bad, but at the service we discovered, that the roll cage was damaged and could not be repaired. For safety reasons, we could not re-start the final day of the rally," Rovanperä explained.

Italian privateer Fabio Andolfi together with co-driver Simone Scattolin showed impressive speed as well. Having finished last year in third WRC 2 position at Rally France, this time they were among the frontrunners right from the start. But towards the end of the rally, they came more and more under pressure from European U28 Champions Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov. Driving another privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5, the two Russians, despite lack of experience with the Corsican roads, set a fabulous fastest time during the penultimate special stage and moved into the interim lead. But during the very last stage, Fabio Andolfi/Simone Scattolin fought back and finally achieved their first WRC 2 category win.



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Page 2 of 4

“Kalle and Jonne did not manage to adapt their speed properly regarding the fact that they were the very first time in Corsica, which is one of the most difficult tarmac rallies in the world. Congratulations to Fabio Andolfi and Nikolay Gryazin for their great performance. Both again demonstrated the competitiveness of our ŠKODA FABIA R5 and secured a double win in the WRC 2 category for ŠKODA,” emphasized ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek.

Final Results Rally France/Tour de Corse (WRC 2)

1. Andolfi/Scattolin (ITA/ITA), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 3:34:08.6 h
2. Gryazin/Fedorov (RUS/RUS), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3.9 sec.
3. Kajetanovicz/Szcepaniak (POL/POL), VW Polo GTI R5, +2:53.3 min.
4. Katsuta/Barrit (JPN/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +3:51.9 min.
5. Yates/Morgan (GBR/GBR), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +3:58.5 min.

Current championship standings WRC 2 Pro/Drivers (after four of 14 rounds)

1. Lukasz Pieniazek (POL), Ford, 62 points
2. Gus Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 40 points
3. Kalle Rovanperä (FIN), ŠKODA, 36 points
4. Mads Østberg (NOR), Citroën, 25 points

Current championship standings WRC 2 Pro/Manufacturers (after four of 14 rounds)

1. Ford, 102 points
2. ŠKODA, 36 points
3. Citroën, 25 points

Number of the day: 5

With five crews driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 into the top ten of the WRC 2 category, the Czech brand was the most successful at Rally France/Tour de Corse.

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
Sweden	14/02–17/02/2019
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

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



Page 3 of 4

Australia

14/11–17/11/2019

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ŠKODA at Rally France/Tour de Corse

At the French round of the FIA World Rally Championship, ŠKODA Motorsport works crew Kalle Rovander/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) head to retire from the lead in WRC 2 Pro category after an accident

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Source: ŠKODAAUTO



ŠKODA at Rally France/Tour de Corse

Driving a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5, Fabio Andolfi/Simone Scattolin (ITA/ITA) secured a well deserved victory after a tense battle in WRC 2 category

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Page 4 of 4

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 39,000 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.