

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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Rally Portugal: Jan Kopecký leads WRC 2 Pro category at WRC debut of ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo

- › After the first leg, reigning WRC 2 Champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler top WRC 2 Pro category ahead of teammates Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen, who suffered a puncture
- › Apart from that, both ŠKODA works crews so far had a trouble-free run during the FIA World Rally Championship debut of the ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo
- › On Friday the two ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo won four from seven stages among the 32 cars strong field of R5 cars

Matosinhos, 31 May 2019 – So far a more than promising FIA World Rally Championship debut of the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo: After the first leg of Rally Portugal (30/05–02/06/2019) ŠKODA works crew Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE) lead the WRC 2 Pro category ahead of teammates Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN).

Rally Portugal started on Thursday (30 May) in the scenic town of Coimbra. The first day of competition on Friday (31 May) featured the return to the famous Arganil region with six stages plus the show stage on the rallycross circuit of Lousada, in total covering roughly 90 kilometres.

Right from the start of its debut on world championship level, Kalle Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen powered the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo into the lead of the WRC 2 Pro category. After winning the first three stages, a puncture during the fourth test cost them more than 40 seconds and also the lead. "The puncture came out of nowhere; I didn't hit anything. The stages were much rougher than I expected, you cannot go flat out everywhere," explained Kalle Rovanperä.

While Rovanperä's teammate Jan Kopecký had a trouble-free run in the second ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, the closest competitor of the ŠKODA works crews, Citroën driver Mads Østberg, dropped down the leader board due to technical issues. Although Kopecký, the reigning WRC 2 champion, had not driven on gravel in competition since Rally Spain last November, he did not waste time to settle in. The Czech took the lead of the WRC 2 Pro category during the second loop of the morning stages and defended this position until the day's finish.

On the tough gravel roads of Rally Portugal, the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo so far demonstrated speed and reliability. Rovanperä and Kopecký won four of leg one's seven stages among the R5 competitors. On Saturday, the longest leg of the rally, the ŠKODA works crews have to master eight more tough special stages totalling more than 165 kilometres.

Standings Rally Portugal after Day 1 (WRC 2 Pro)

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZE/CZE), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, 1:07:16.0 h
2. Rovanperä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, +4.8 sec.
3. Pieniazek/Gerber (POL/POL), Ford Fiesta R5, +1:53.6 min.
4. Østberg/Eriksen (NOR/NOR), Citroën C3 R5, +19:09.7 min.



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Number of the day: 4

On its FIA World Rally Championship debut, the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo was fastest among the R5 cars on four of the first day's seven stages.

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
Australia	14/11–17/11/2019

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Media images:



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler returned to the FIA World Rally Championship with the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, leading the WRC 2 Pro category at Rally Portugal after the first day

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Source: ŠKODAAUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal

ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovander/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) suffered a puncture and are second in WRC 2 Pro after day one of Rally Portugal, seventh round of 2019 FIA World Rally Championship

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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 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.