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Neste Rally Finland: ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo driver Rovanperä wins WRC 2 Pro category at home game

- › For the fourth time in a row during the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship, 18 years old Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen top the WRC 2 Pro category
- › ŠKODA Motorsport takes outright lead in the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers standings
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Kalle and Jonne met the high expectations exceptionally well and mastered the challenge in front of their fans in the best possible way."

Jyväskylä, 4 August 2019 – At Neste Rally Finland, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo crew of Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) led the WRC 2 Pro competition from start to finish and scored their fourth victory in a row on a round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship. The new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo not only remains undefeated since its homologation in April this year. Also, ŠKODA Motorsport conquered the outright lead in the manufacturers standings of the championship's WRC 2 Pro category. On top of that, Russian crew Nicolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov won the WRC 2 category for private teams with the predecessor model ŠKODA FABIA R5, proving that both generations of the FABIA are the fastest cars of the R5 class.

On the final day of Neste Rally Finland, ninth round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019, four final stages were waiting for the crews. The famous "Ruuhimäki" test with its enormous jumps alone attracted so many spectators, that the assigned parking areas were flooded by cars and mobile homes already the night before. In front of a massive home crowd, Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen were cool like this time the weather in middle Finland was. During the last leg of the four day event, they continued their fast and concentrated drive with their ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo. There never was a doubt, that the Finnish crew would secure victory on their home game.

"It is incredible! After some setup modifications on Friday the car worked very well and I had proper fun! I was going flat out on the fast passages and took some caution over the rough parts. We would have liked to be even quicker, but we didn't want to risk anything. Driving the ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo in Finland – that is rallying at its finest," celebrated an enthusiastic Kalle Rovanperä together with co-driver Jonne Halttunen on the podium in his home town Jyväskylä. ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek praised the Finns: "Kalle and Jonne impressed me with their nerves strength. They met the high expectations exceptionally well and mastered the challenge in front of their fans in the best possible way. From our rich experience we know, how extremely demanding it is for Finnish crews, to shine at their home event."

In the back of Rovanperä/Halttunen, the WRC 2 category for private crews saw a strong performance by French ŠKODA pairing Pierre-Louis Loubet and co-driver Vincent Landais. Rallying the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo for the first time, they initially were in control of their class. But they left the road during the last stage of Saturday and lost valuable time. As a consequence, Russian ŠKODA privateers Nicolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov took a well deserved victory with the predecessor model ŠKODA FABIA R5.

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Final Result Neste Rally Finland (WRC 2 Pro/WRC 2)

1. Rovannerä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, 2:38:34.4 h*
2. Gryazin/Fedorov (RUS/RUS), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2:34.6 min.
3. Huttunen/Lukka (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20 R5, +2:48.6 min.
4. Kristoffersson/Skjaermoen (SWE/NOR), VW Polo GTI R5, +4:38.4 min.
5. Camilli/Veillas (FRA/FRA), Ford Fiesta R5 MKII, +4:47.0 min.*

**Factory nominated crews eligible to score points in the WRC 2 Pro category*

Championship Standings WRC 2 Pro/Drivers (after 9 of 14 rounds)

1. Kalle Rovannerä (FIN), ŠKODA, 136 points
2. Mads Østberg (NOR), Citroën, 98 points
3. Gus Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 85 points
4. Lukasz Pieniazek (POL), Ford, 74 points
5. Jan Kopecký (CZE), ŠKODA, 36 points

Championship Standings WRC 2 Pro/Manufacturers (after 9 of 14 rounds)

1. ŠKODA, 184 points
2. Ford, 177 points
3. Citroën, 98 points

Number of the day: 4

With its WRC 2 Pro victory at Neste Rally Finland, ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen for the fourth time in a row won the category during the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship.

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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ŠKODA at Neste Rally Finland

By winning the WRC 2 Pro category at Neste Rally Finland, ŠKODA works crew Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo) increased their lead in the championship standings

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Neste Rally Finland

Driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo at Neste Rally Finland, Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) took their fourth WRC 2 Pro category win of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship

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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 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.