

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



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ŠKODA Motorsport Crews

Driver:	Jan Kopecký (Czech Republic)
Born:	28 January 1982 in Opočno/today Czech Republic
First rally:	2001 Rally Šumava/Czech Republic (ŠKODA OCTAVIA Grp.A)
First WRC rally:	2002 Rally Deutschland/Germany (Toyota Corolla WRC)
Co-drivers:	Pavel Dresler and Jan Hloušek (Czech Republic)



To follow the footsteps of his father Josef, who was an avid rally driver, Jan Kopecký started karting at the age of 13. As soon as possible the young Czech changed to circuit racing, working up his ranks on national level. Soon he started winning, among others the 2001 ŠKODA OCTAVIA Cup on the race track. Using the rally version of the ŠKODA OCTAVIA Kopecký gave his rallying debut the same year and never looked back to circuits.

Competing a ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC in the Czech Championship (ČMR), he impressed the right people at ŠKODA Motorsport. Promoted to factory driver he won his first of today six Czech titles in 2004, driving a ŠKODA FABIA WRC.

When after a break ŠKODA Motorsport returned to rallying in 2009 with the ŠKODA FABIA S2000, Jan Kopecký again was one of the factory drivers. He finished the season second overall in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) and third overall in the Czech Championship. He backed up these results by finishing second overall in the IRC the three following years in a row, always driving a ŠKODA FABIA S2000. In 2012 Kopecký, since then partnered with co-driver Pavel Dresler, again became Czech Champion, taking the European Rally Championship (ERC) a year later with a record six wins.

Up to that point Kopecký had made his name mainly as a tarmac specialist. But in 2014 the former racing driver surprised some people. On demanding gravel stages on the other side of the globe the ŠKODA FABIA S2000 driver won the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

When the ŠKODA FABIA R5 arrived in early 2015, Kopecký started a remarkable series of victories in the Czech Championship. Up to the end of 2019 he was never beaten on home soil again, taking the Czech title from 2015 to 2019 five times in a row.

Also in 2015, Kopecký celebrated his debut win on WRC 2 level of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) during Rally Deutschland. In 2017 for the first time he won a gravel rally on world championship level, taking the win on the gruelling Sardinian roads during Rally Italy. Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler ended the 2017 WRC 2 season fourth overall. In 2018, they had a fantastic season, winning five WRC 2 events, finishing second once and Jan Kopecký conquering the 2018 WRC 2 drivers' championship. In 2019, he won the WRC 2 Pro category at Rally Deutschland and with additional top results collected valuable championship points, so that ŠKODA won the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' championship of the FIA World Rally Championship.

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Co-Driver: Jan Hloušek (Czech Republic)

Born: 15 December 1992 in Jablonec nad Nisou/today Czech Republic

First rally: Rally Liberec 2012/ Czech Republic

First WRC rally: Wales Rally GB 2019

Co-driver to: Jan Kopecký (Czech Republic)



Like many other co-drivers, Jan Hloušek collected some experience as a rally driver in his early years. He took part in his home Rally Liberec 2012 when he drove a ŠKODA FELICIA to eighth position in class A1. But from then on, he focussed on competing as a co-driver.

First event together with Filip Mareš was Rally Orlické hory 2014, where they surprised in a Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VI prepared by Sportgarage Praha. Unfortunately, they had to retire close to the finish because of low fuel pressure. Since then Jan remained the regular co-driver of young Czech rally star Mareš.

Together with him, Hloušek became Czech Junior Champion and FIA ERT3 Champion in 2016. In 2017, he won the Czech Junior and 2WD Championship and became FIA ERC3 co-driver champion. In 2018, Mareš/Hloušek switched to a ŠKODA FABIA R5 prepared by Roman Kresta Racing. Competing under the banner of and strongly supported by ACCR Czech Rally Team, they finished fourth in the Czech Rally Championship. Alongside Filip Mareš, Jan also collected experience on international events as well and won the FIA European Rally Junior Championship (ERC1) in 2019.

Together with Jan Kopecký, Hloušek finished second in the WRC 2 Pro category at the world championship's rounds Wales Rally GB and Rally Spain. Thus, they supported ŠKODA to win the WRC 2 Pro manufacturers' championship of the FIA World Rally Championship 2019.

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Driver: Kalle Rovannerä (Finland)
Born: 1 October 2000 in Jyväskylä/Finland
First rally: 2013 Rallisprints Gulbis/Latvia (Citroën C2 R2)
First WRC rally: 2017 Wales Rally GB/UK (Ford Fiesta R5)
Co-driver: Jonne Halttunen (Finland)



Kalle Rovannerä has rallying virtually in his blood. His father Harri in his prime was factory driver for several teams. He even scored one victory in the FIA World Rally Championship (Sweden 2001).

When he was eight years old, Kalle was filmed drifting a small Toyota rally car through snowy forests like an expert. Years later, the video went viral on YouTube with today more than one million views.

Because Finnish law doesn't allow participation in rallies before the age of 18 – until Kalle got an exemption from that rule – he went to Latvia, starting with rally sprints at the age of twelve. For the next couple of years, co-driver Risto Pietiläinen, not by chance father Harri's former navigator, had to drive the road sections. That didn't stop little Kalle from winning the Latvian Junior Championship in 2015, following it up with the main championship in 2016 and 2017, on both occasions driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

Meanwhile Finnish manager legend Timo Jouhki had taken over, in 2016 sending the teenager from Finland's rally capital Jyväskylä to the Italian Rally Championship to get some experience on tarmac. During the Memorial Bettega, a rally show in Bologna, Rovannerä drove a World Rally Car (WRC), beating some factory drivers on his way to the final.

On October 2nd 2017, he passed his driving test, one day after his 17th birthday, courtesy to a waiver by the Finnish government. With this important paper in the pocket, Rovannerä was finally cleared to compete in international events. Jonne Halttunen became the new co-driver instead of veteran Risto Pietiläinen (then 50).

Rovannerä celebrated his debut in the FIA World Rally Championship with Wales Rally GB 2017, only three weeks after his 17th birthday. During the 2017 season's final in Australia, he became the youngest driver ever to win a round of the WRC 2 category. In 2018, he won the WRC 2 rounds in Wales – only days after his 18th birthday – and Spain, finishing his first season at ŠKODA Motorsport in third overall of the WRC 2 Championship for Drivers. At Wales Rally GB 2019, Kalle Rovannerä again won the WRC 2 Pro category, thus securing the WRC 2 Pro drivers' championship already two rounds before the season's final.



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Co-driver: Jonne Halttunen (Finland)

Born: 13 December 1985 in Jyväskylä/Finland

First rally: 2007 Jari-Pekka Rally (Finland)

First WRC rally: 2011 Rally Finland

Co-driver to: Kalle Rovannerä (Finland)



Jonne Halttunen came into Kalle Rovannerä's car with two titles as Finnish Champion under his belt, both won co-driving Teemu Asunmaa in a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA R5 in 2015 and 2016. Asunmaa/Halttunen repeated this success in 2017. Obviously not a full-time job, because during the same season Halttunen navigated Kalle Rovannerä to first overall in the Latvian Championship as well. The Finnish duo also won the WRC 2 category at the 2017 season closing Rally Australia.

In 2018, Halttunen together with Kalle Rovannerä won the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC 2 rounds in Great Britain/Wales and Spain, ending the season on third spot in the WRC 2 overall standings. At Wales Rally GB 2019, Jonne Halttunen won alongside of Kalle Rovannerä the WRC 2 Pro category, thus securing the WRC 2 Pro drivers' and co-drivers' titles already two rounds before the season's final.

Halttunen has a heart not only for the latest generation of rally cars. In 2016, he became runner-up in the Historic European Rally Championship, co-driving fellow Finn Ville Silvasti in a Porsche 911 Carrera.

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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.

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