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Rally Portugal: 18 privately entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 among the 42 entries in the group of Rally2 vehicles

- › WRC2 overall leader Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) had to withdraw due to COVID-19
- › South-Americans Marco Bulacia (BOL) and co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian (ARG) of ŠKODA Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT chase more WRC2 points
- › ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo crew Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL) comes to Portugal on the back of a WRC3 victory at Rally Croatia
- › Six years ago, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 started its impressive success story on the challenging gravel roads of Rally Portugal

Mladá Boleslav, 18 May 2021 – Six years ago, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 started its impressive career at Rally Portugal. Coming weekend (20 – 23 May), a total of 18 ŠKODA FABIA – after a change in regulations renamed to Rally2 – feature on the entry list of the 2021 FIA World Rally Championship’s fourth round. They face some of the series’ most demanding gravel roads including a world famous jump.

ŠKODA and Rally Portugal – this has always been a perfect match. For example six years ago, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 started its impressive success story on the gravel roads of this FIA World Rally Championship classic. In 2019, the successor model ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo celebrated a double victory at its premiere in the hands of factory drivers Kalle Rovanperä and Jan Kopecký. Since then, the Czech rally car, after a change in regulations renamed to ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, has always been the most successful and popular model of its category. At the upcoming Rally Portugal, a total of 42 Rally2 cars from five brands are expected, fighting for victory in categories WRC2 and WRC3. 18 of them are privately entered FABIA.

Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) of ŠKODA Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT had to withdraw his entry on short notice. The WRC2 overall leader was tested COVID-19 positive before his journey to Portugal. “Obviously, I’m devastated for the team. I really wanted to show, that the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo is the best car on gravel,” Mikkelsen said. “I have gone into self-isolation right away and will do everything to be 100 per cent fit for the upcoming Rally Italia Sardegna.”

Toksport WRT teammate Marco Bulacia currently lies second in the WRC2 drivers’ overall classification. The 20 years old Bolivian and his Argentinean co-driver Marcelo Der Ohannesian clearly feel at home on loose surfaces. “After a long time, I can hardly wait to drive the ŠKODA FABIA in a gravel rally again,” Bulacia emphasizes.

Rally Croatia saw Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL) drive a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo to victory in WRC3 category for private drivers, where Rally2 vehicles are used as well. Also in a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, Emil Lindholm/Mikael Korhonen (FIN/FIN) came second. Their duel is definitely one to watch on Portuguese gravel.

Rally Portugal kicks off on Thursday evening (20 May) with the ceremonial start in the city centre of Coimbra. During Friday (21 May), the rally leads the teams to the region around Arganil. A total of



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eight special stages over a distance of around 123 kilometres has to be driven. As in previous years, Saturday (22 May) is the longest day of the event. The leg's seven special stages, covering more than 165 kilometres, offer a mix of sandy tracks, rough passages with stones and rocks and deep ruts, that increase the challenge especially during the respective second runs of the stages. The right choice of tires will be key to success. A softer compound promises more traction on sandy surfaces, while harder tires guarantee less wear on longer test and rougher roads.

On Sunday (23 May), the iconic stages close to Fafe with their fast and smooth gravel roads including the famous "Fafe Jump" are the highlight of Rally Portugal. All in all, the teams have to tackle 21 stages covering 346.26 kilometres. The winner crosses the finish line in Matosinhos near Porto at around 14h20 local (15h20 CEST) on Sunday.

Did you know,...

...that the ŠKODA FABIA R5 made its FIA World Rally Championship debut during Rally Portugal 2015?

...that Rally Portugal was first held in 1967 and in 1973 was one of the founding events of the then new World Rally Championship?

...that until 1994 the rally started in Estoril close to Lisbon and the first leg was always held on tarmac, before it became an all gravel-event in 1995?

...that from 2007 to 2014, the rally was held in the Algarve region before moving back to the north of the country?

...that in 2012 world champion to be Sébastien Ogier won the class with a ŠKODA FABIA S2000 and finished an impressive 7th overall?

2021 FIA World Rally Championship

Rallye Monte-Carlo	21 – 24 January
Arctic Rally Finland powered by CapitalBox	25 – 28 February
Rally Croatia	22 – 25 April
Vodafone Rally Portugal	20 – 23 May
Rally Italia Sardegna	3 – 6 June
Safari Rally Kenya	24 – 27 June
Rally Estonia	15 – 18 July
Renties Ypres Rally Belgium	13 – 15 August
Acropolis Rally Greece	9 – 12 September
Rally Finland	30 September – 3 October
RallyRACC Rally de España	14 – 17 October
Rally Japan	11 – 14 November



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ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Portugal

Junior team Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG) compete in a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of ŠKODA Motorsport supported team Toksport WRT

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Rally Portugal

Kajetan Kajetanowicz and co-driver Maciej Szczepaniak (ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo) from Poland chase another victory in WRC3 category

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been successful in motorsports since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include victory in the European Touring Car Championship 1981 as well as multiple titles in the FIA World Rally Championship's WRC2 category. Over the years, ŠKODA customer teams also won numerous national championships as well as titles in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the der Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC), the FIA North American and Central American Rally Championship (NACAM), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Rallye Monte-Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2009, the ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 took the rally scene by storm. The following seasons, the all-wheel-drive rally car with a 2.0 litres normally aspirated engine won 50 national and international titles worldwide. It then wrote the most successful chapter in ŠKODA's motorsport history – until its successor surpassed it. The ŠKODA FABIA R5, a production-based rally car with four-wheel drive and 1.6 litres turbo engine, was homologated in its original form by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. Further developed to ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo (homologated on 1 April 2019), the high-tech car successfully continues the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport. Due to changes in regulations, the car was re-named ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in 2020.

The success story of the ŠKODA FABIA R5 took off in 2016, when Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won the WRC2 drivers' title of the FIA World Rally Championship. The following year, Pontus Tidemand (SWE) won the WRC2 drivers' category, while ŠKODA Motorsport took the WRC2 manufacturers' title. In 2018, ŠKODA factory driver Jan Kopecký was crowned WRC 2 drivers' champion. 2019 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Kalle

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Rovanperä and Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC2 Pro drivers' and co-drivers' title as well as substantially supporting ŠKODA Motorsport to win the WRC2 Pro manufacturers' title. In 2020 ŠKODA customer team Toksport WRT became Team Champion of the WRC2 category.

ŠKODA AUTO

- › is focusing on three priorities with the "NEXT LEVEL ŠKODA" program for the future: expanding the model portfolio in the direction of entry-level segments, opening up new markets for further growth in the volume segment, and making concrete progress in sustainability and diversity.
- › currently offers its customers ten passenger-car series: the CITIGO[®] iV, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ, KODIAQ and ENYAQ iV.
- › delivered more than one million vehicles to customers around the world in 2020.
- › is part of Volkswagen Group since 30 years. 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 and India mainly through Group partnerships as well as in Ukraine with a local partner.
- › employs approximately 42,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.