

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE



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## NESTE Rally Finland: ŠKODA privateer Pietarinen wins WRC 2, ŠKODA junior Rovannerä fourth

- › Surprising first victory in a WRC 2 championship event for Finnish ŠKODA customer team Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen
- › After suspension damage cost them the WRC 2 lead on Saturday, 17 years old ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen set all fastest times during final leg
- › Victory number seven for a ŠKODA crew from eight rallies of 2018 WRC 2 championship

Jyväskylä, 29 July 2018 – For the best part of three days of NESTE Rally Finland ŠKODA's 17 years old Kalle Rovannerä (FIN) and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN) looked like the dominant winners of the WRC 2 category. But during Saturday's penultimate stage the left front suspension broke when the car hit a rock under braking. After roadside emergency repairs, the two Finns managed to finish the day in fourth position. With a stunning race to catch up, they set all fastest times in WRC 2 during the last leg and finally missed the podium by just 1.9 seconds. While Rovannerä's factory teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) had to retire after an accident on Saturday, local ŠKODA privateers Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen (FIN/FIN) won the WRC 2 category with an impressive performance.

During the Sunday leg of NESTE Rally Finland, ŠKODA customer crew Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen controlled their lead in the WRC 2 category up to the finish line in Jyväskylä. After the final four stages, totalling around 46 kilometres, the locals celebrated the most important victory of their career so far. Meanwhile ŠKODA junior Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen not only proved, that they were by far the fastest WRC 2 pairing at NESTE Rally Finland. They also demonstrated advanced skills as car mechanics following an incident during Saturday's penultimate stage. After hitting a rock, hidden in the deep ruts on the racing line, the front left suspension of their ŠKODA FABIA R5 broke. Giving up was never an option for the 17 years old Finn and his co-driver. They successfully performed emergency repairs at the roadside, cautiously drove the leg's last stage and managed to bring the car back to service – still holding fourth position in WRC 2!

During the same Special Stage 18 teammates Ole Christian Veiby/Stig Rune Skjaermoen went off at high speed. Thanks to the complete safety package of their ŠKODA FABIA R5 the two Norwegians escaped the multiple roll without injuries.

After his ŠKODA FABIA R5 had been successfully repaired at the evening service on Saturday, Kalle Rovannerä started his attack for a podium position on Sunday morning. On the first special stage of the day alone, he gained 15.2 seconds in 11 kilometres and reduced the gap to the third placed Ford driver Gus Greensmith to 30.8 seconds. On the next stage, Rovannerä was quickest again, closing the gap to 24.5 seconds, but afterwards confessed: "I think the gap is a little bit too big. But still a lot can happen." Another fastest time brought him another 13.1 seconds closer to the podium. But even the fourth best time of the day during the last stage was not enough – in the end only 1.9 seconds separated Rovannerä from third place in the WRC 2 category!





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While Kalle Rovanperä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen set all fastest WRC 2 times on Sunday's stages, local ŠKODA privateers and current Finnish Championship leaders Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen (FIN/FIN) won the category – the biggest success of their career so far.

ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek commented: "Congratulations to our local ŠKODA customer team Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen for winning the WRC 2 category at NESTE Rally Finland. Kalle and Jonne delivered a fantastic performance and showed a great moral, fighting back after their mishap on Saturday and setting all fastest time during the final leg!"

## Final result NESTE Rally Finland (WRC 2)

1. Pietarinen/Raitanen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 2:45:18.4 h
2. Huttunen/Linnaketo, (FIN/FIN), Hyundai i20, +1:06.8 min.
3. Greensmith/Parry (GBR/GBR), Ford Fiesta R5, +2:34.9 min.
4. Rovanperä/Halttunen (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA FABIA R5, +2:36.8 min.
5. Loubet/Landais (FRA/FRA), Hyundai i20, +4:05.0 min.

## Championship standings WRC 2 (after 8 of 13 rounds)

1. Tidemand (SWE), ŠKODA, 93 points
2. Kopecký (CZE) ŠKODA, 75 points
3. Greensmith (GBR), Ford, 55 points
4. Veiby (NOR), ŠKODA, 45 points

Number of the day: 7

ŠKODA crews so far won the WRC 2 category at seven out of eight rounds of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship.

## The calendar of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	24/01–28/01/2018
Sweden	15/02–18/02/2018
Mexico	08/03–11/03/2018
France	05/04–08/04/2018
Argentina	26/04–29/04/2018
Portugal	17/05–20/05/2018
Italy	07/06–10/06/2018
<b>Finland</b>	<b>26/07–29/07/2018</b>
Germany	16/08–19/08/2018
Turkey	13/09–16/09/2018
Great Britain	04/10–07/10/2018
Spain	25/10–28/10/2018
Australia	15/11–18/11/2018



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### ŠKODA at NESTE Rally Finland 2018

Fighting back after an incident on Saturday Finnish ŠKODA junior crew Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen (ŠKODA FABIA R5) missed the podium by just 1.9 seconds

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA at NESTE Rally Finland 2018

Local ŠKODA customer team Eerik Pietarinen/Juhana Raitanen won the WRC 2 category at NESTE Rally Finland – the biggest success of their career so far

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





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## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

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.

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. In the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) 2016, Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker. In total, ten of the 2016 season's races in the World Rally Championship were won by a ŠKODA FABIA R5. ŠKODA drivers Gustavo Saba (PRY) and Gaurav Gill (IND) also won the continental championships in South America and the Asia-Pacific region at the wheel of the successful ŠKODA FABIA R5. Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) was unbeatable in the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), while a further ten national titles also went the way of ŠKODA drivers.

2017 was the most successful year in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. Works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) became WRC 2 Champions, ŠKODA Motorsport won the Team Championship. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) won the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the third time in a row and are the spearhead of in total 14 crews winning their country's national titles. Furthermore the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), the FIA South American Rally Championship (CODASUR) and the FIA African Rally Championship (ARC) have been won by teams competing in a ŠKODA FABIA R5.

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- › currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- › in 2017 delivered more than 1.2 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs over 35,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

