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Rally Portugal: World championship debut for ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo with Kopecký and Rovannerä

- › Reigning WRC 2 Champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and teammates Kalle Rovannerä/Jonne Halttunen compete the newly homologated ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo
- › Both ŠKODA works crews chasing points in the WRC 2 Pro category of Rally Portugal, seventh round of the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship
- › ŠKODA with 15 entries strongest brand among the 32 cars in the R5 category
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “After a proper testing program, we are eager to see the improved ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo for the first time on world championship level.”

Mladá Boleslav, 29 May 2019 – After intensive testing, the freshly homologated ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo will be seen for the first time in the FIA World Rally Championship. Like the successful predecessor in 2015, the updated Czech rally car will debut at Rally Portugal (30/05/–02/06/2019). Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler (CZE/CZE), fresh from winning the recent round of the Czech Rally Championship (Rally Český Krumlov) on the ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo's maiden competition outing, are highly motivated for their return to world championship level. Their ŠKODA teammates Kalle Rovannerä and co-driver Jonne Halttunen (FIN/FIN), who won the WRC 2 Pro category at Rally Chile, want to move up further in the championship standings with a good performance in Portugal.

Four years ago, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 started its famous career on the tough gravel roads of Rally Portugal. Up to now, 273 cars have been sold to customers worldwide. During that time, ŠKODA Motorsport won four times in a row the WRC 2 Team Championship. ŠKODA crews celebrated 747 category victories as well as 56 regional and national championship titles. Esapekka Lappi, Pontus Tidemand and Jan Kopecký became WRC 2 Drivers Champions. Now the moment of truth has come for the car's successor: The ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo, homologated by the international motorsport federation FIA and therefore eligible for competition, will make its debut in the FIA World Rally Championship at the upcoming Rally Portugal.

“We are happy, that our newly homologated ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo was reliable and fast already on its debut one week ago, giving Jan and Pavel a trouble-free run to win the third round of the Czech Rally Championship, the Rally Český Krumlov. After a proper testing program, we are eager to see the improved ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo for the first time on world championship level,” says ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek.

“Our first WRC 2 Pro win of the year at Rally Chile tasted pretty good, especially because we didn't have a great start into the season. It was great to be back on the top step of the podium,” comments Kalle Rovannerä on the past round of the FIA World Rally Championship. “After Jan's victory on Czech tarmac we now want to show the potential of our new ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo on the Portuguese gravel roads”, he adds. Again, ŠKODA is with 15 entries strongest brand among the 32 cars in the R5 category.

After moving back to the north of the country to the region around Porto in 2015, the Rally Portugal is one of the most spectator-crowded events of the FIA World Rally Championship. The notorious



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Fafe jump alone every year attracts ten thousands of spectators. The atmosphere along the stages is only comparable to a football stadium.

The rally starts on Thursday (30 May) in the scenic town of Coimbra. The first full rally day on Friday (31 May) features the return to the famous Arganil region with six stages plus the show stage in Lousada, in total covering roughly 90 kilometres. Like in 2018, the Saturday leg (1 June) is the longest, running over more than 165 kilometres divided into eight special stages with a mixture of sandy roads, rocks and deep ruts for the second pass of the stages. The right tyre choice, considering soft compounds for more traction and hard compound in order to manage tyre wear on the long stages, will be one of the keys to success. On Sunday (2 June) the spectacular Fafe loop with five stages on fast and smooth gravel roads, including the famous jump, is the spectator highlight of the event. In total, the teams face 20 special stages totalling 306.97 kilometres. At 14h20 the winner will reach the podium in Matosinhos close to the city of Porto.

Did you know...

...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 traditionally started in Estoril close to Lisbon and the first leg was 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?

...that the ŠKODA FABIA R5 made his FIA World Rally Championship debut at Rally Portugal 2015, while the newly homologated ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo will be seen in the WRC for the first time during the 2019 event?

...that Rally Portugal will return to the famous stages around Arganil for the first time since 2001?

...that in 2012 world champion to be Sebastién Ogier won his class with a ŠKODA FABIA S2000 and finished an impressive 7th overall, while Esapekka Lappi was the WRC 2 winner with a ŠKODA FABIA S2000 in 2013?



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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 Rally Portugal

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler return to the FIA World Rally Championship with the newly homologated ŠKODA FABIA R5 evo at Rally Portugal.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Portugal

ŠKODA works driver Kalle Rovanperä wants to move up the leader board of WRC 2 Pro with a good result at Rally Portugal, seventh round of 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.

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