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Rally Italia Sardegna: ŠKODA privateers fight for victories in WRC2 and WRC3

- › Oliver Solberg (SWE) and co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL), supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, fight for WRC3 victory at the sixth round of the FIA World Rally Championship
- › Former WRC2 champion Pontus Tidemand (SWE) leads WRC2 and is fighting for the victory in order to keep the chances alive for a possible category title with his privately entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo
- › As in previous year, ŠKODA with 15 entries is the strongest brand in the field of 35 Rally2 cars

Mladá Boleslav, 7 October 2020 – Driving a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo at Rally Italia Sardegna (08/10–11/10/2020), ŠKODA supported Oliver Solberg (SWE) and his co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL) will fight for victory in the WRC3 category, which is dedicated to private crews. Other favorites are Polish private team and stablemates Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL). They are equal competitors and a close fight between these two crews is expected. Former WRC2 champion Pontus Tidemand (SWE) and co-driver Patrick Barth (SWE) lead the championship standings in WRC2 in a private ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo of team Toksport WRT. The Swedish pairing is aiming for another victory in order to keep the chances alive to win the category title. With 15 entries, ŠKODA is like last year the most popular brand among the field of Rally2 cars (formerly known as R5 cars) on the island.

In order to promote young talents, ŠKODA Motorsport is continuing to support young and talented drivers also at Rally Italia Sardegna. After the fight against the spread of the COVID-19 virus caused the rally program to be interrupted, 19-year-old Oliver Solberg (SWE) and co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL) are back in the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo. They are among the top favourites for winning the WRC3 category of the FIA World Rally Championship's sixth round.

Since the re-start of the FIA World Rally Championship, ŠKODA customer crews impressed with top results. Three times FIA European Rally Champion Kajetan Kajetanowicz from Poland, together with co-driver Maciej Szczepaniak competing in a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo which is privately run by the Lotos rally team, won the WRC3 category at the recent Rally Turkey. They were also fastest in the combined field of the Rally2 cars. Right now, 2017 WRC2 champion Pontus Tidemand (SWE) and co-driver Patrick Barth (SWE) lead the WRC2 championship standings in a private ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo run by Toksport WRT. Another category win would be important to keep the chances alive on winning the 2020 title. The Mediterranean island of Sardinia has always been a good place for ŠKODA. 2017 and 2018, Jan Kopecký won the WRC2 category. Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) and Jan Kopecký (CZE) achieved 2019 a double category victory for ŠKODA. In 2020 a total of 15 teams run a ŠKODA, the majority of the 35-strong field of Rally2 vehicles.

The Rally Italia Sardegna, which is held on sandy and stony gravel roads, features 16 special stages totalling 238.84 kilometres. As in 2019, Saturday offers the longest leg of the rally with nearly 102 kilometres of stages. On Sunday, the decision will take place on the remaining four stages near the coast north of the start and finish town of Alghero. Due to the measures taken



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against the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Rally Italia Sardegna will take place without spectators for the first time.

Did you know,

...that the Italian round of the FIA World Rally Championship until 2003 was held on the mainland, based in Sanremo, before it moved to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia?

...the event today known as Rally Italia Sardegna first took place in 1928 under the name "Rally of the Flowers" and was (except for 2010, when it was counting for the IRC/Intercontinental Rally Championship) a part of the FIA World Rally Championship ever since its inauguration in 1973?

...Michèle Mouton became the first – and until today only – woman to win a WRC round when she finished first at the 1981 Sanremo Rally?

...that the iconic stage "Monte Lerno" of Rally Italia Sardegna features the spectacular "Micky's jump", comparable only to the famous Fafe jump of Rally Portugal.

The calendar of the 2020 FIA World Rally Championship

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Monte-Carlo	23/01–26/01/2020
Sweden	13/02–16/02/2020
Estonia	04/09–06/09/2020
Turkey	18/09–20/09/2020
Italy	08/10–11/10/2020
Belgium	19/11–22/11/2020

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Media images:



ŠKODA at Rally Italia Sardegna

Oliver Solberg (SWE) and co-driver Aaron Johnston (IRL), supported by ŠKODA, fight for victory in the WRC3 category with their ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Italia Sardegna

Former WRC2 champion Pontus Tidemand (SWE) leads the WRC2 category with a privately entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo and aims for the title.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Italia Sardegna

Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL/POL) are among the favorites in the WRC3 category with their privately entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo.

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Quelle: 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 Haltunen (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

- › is this year celebrating 125 years since the company was founded during the pioneering era of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established car manufacturers in the world.
- › 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 1.24 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2019.
- › 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 and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs approximately 42,000 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.