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Rallye Monte-Carlo: ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo driver Andreas Mikkelsen among favourites in WRC2

- › Opening round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2021 marks start of cooperation between ŠKODA Motorsport and reigning WRC2 Team Champion, Toksport WRT
- › With support from ŠKODA Motorsport, Toksport WRT runs two ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo for crews Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene (NOR/NOR) and Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG) in WRC2 category
- › With 16 privately entered FABIA among the field of 34 Rally2 cars, ŠKODA is again the strongest brand in this group

Mladá Boleslav, 20 January 2021 – Driving two ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo from Toksport WRT with support from ŠKODA Motorsport, Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene (NOR/NOR) and Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG) will compete a full WRC2 season in the FIA World Rally Championship 2021. At the opening round, the legendary Rallye Monte-Carlo (21 – 24 January 2021), both crews are among the top favourites and will face tough competition in the 34 crews strong Rally2 field. Seven of them, driving cars from four different manufacturers, are eligible to score points in the WRC2 category.

Andreas Mikkelsen has a remarkable track record with ŠKODA. Driving a ŠKODA FABIA S2000, he won the Intercontinental Rally Championship (IRC) in 2011 and 2012. In 2017 he made a stunning return to the Czech brand at the Rallye Monte-Carlo. He not only won the WRC2 category, but on top of that he also finished a remarkable seventh in the overall classification among the more powerful WRC1 cars. At the Rally France/Tour de Corse the same year, he again won the WRC2 category, helping ŠKODA Motorsport to take the WRC2 Team Championship of the FIA World Rally Championship. Last year, he returned to the Czech brand again, won Rally Hungary (penultimate round of the FIA European Rally Championship) and added a victory in WRC3 category at the ACI Rally Monza, final round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2020, by finishing a very good sixth overall.

Andreas Mikkelsen, navigated by co-driver Ola Fløene and supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, will compete the full WRC2 season of the FIA World Rally Championship 2021 in a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo from Toksport WRT. The Norwegian has a clear target: "I am aiming for the WRC2 title and want to win the category at each event I am competing. To start with, Rallye Monte-Carlo is an event I like, where I have achieved good results in the past. Also, the ever-changing road conditions fit the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo very well. So we should be competitive. But as tyre choice is always difficult, we also have to get this right to win."

"We start into the 2021 season with a further improved version of the ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, which will make its competition debut at the Rallye Monte-Carlo. Overall, the focus of ŠKODA Motorsport will be again on supporting customer teams," Michal Hrabánek, Head of ŠKODA Motorsport, looks ahead.

"We are very proud, that in cooperation with ŠKODA Motorsport we can run two cars in WRC2. We have a great line-up with an experienced driver, Andreas Mikkelsen, and a young talent, Marco Bulacia. Our goal for the season is to defend the WRC2 team title and win as well the drivers'

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championship. So the first step would be to score maximum team points at Rallye Monte-Carlo," comments Toksport WRT principal Serkan Duru.

The first leg of the Rallye Monte-Carlo starts on Thursday (21 January) at 13h10 in the winter sports town of Gap, situated in the middle of the French Alps. During the opening leg, the crews have to face two stages, each of them more than 20 kilometres long. On Friday and Saturday (22/23 January), eight more stages follow before the crews head south to Monaco. The Sunday leg (24 January) features four more stages close to the principality. In total, the crews have to tackle 14 special stages covering roughly 258 kilometres.

Due to the measures taken against the spread of the coronavirus, Rallye Monte-Carlo will take place behind closed doors with no spectators allowed inside the service park and along the stages.

Did you know...

...that the rally was originally designed in order to promote Monte-Carlo as a tourist destination also in winter? Until 1998, the crews – although that year factory teams were exempt – started from a number of cities in Europe and sometimes even North Africa in a so-called "Concentration Run", an endurance test, before the competitors were united in Monaco or France to start the real action.

...that the Rallye Monte-Carlo, first run in 1911, is the oldest event of today's WRC calendar?

...that ŠKODA finished the Rallye Monte-Carlo as early as 1936 with the POPULAR Sport roadster in second place in the class up to 1,500 cc? At the beginning of the 1960s, the OCTAVIA TS beat the competition three times in a row in the class up to 1,300 cc, before the FAVORIT 136L continued this success story at the beginning of the 1990s: The car won its class four times in a row (1991 – 1994).

...that the Rallye Monte-Carlo is the only WRC event, where teams can choose between four types of tyres: slicks, slicks with some studs, winter tyres and winter tyres with studs.

...that tyre choice is extremely difficult and at the same time crucial at Rallye Monte-Carlo? The teams have to tackle up to four stages with four tyres mounted on the car plus a maximum of two spare wheels. Because all too often one stage is covered with snow, the next one icy, wet or even dry, tyre choice mostly is a compromise.

...that therefore crews often fit their car for example with a mixture of studded winter tyres and slick tyres in all kind of combinations in order to somehow meet the changing road conditions?

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2021 FIA World Rally Championship

Monte-Carlo	21 – 24 January
Arctic Lapland (Finland)	25 – 28 February
Croatia	22 – 25 April
Portugal	20 – 23 May
Italia Sardegna	3 – 6 June
Safari Kenya	24 – 27 June
Estonia	15 – 18 July
Finland	29 July – 1 August
Ypres (Belgium)	13 – 15 August
Chile	9 – 12 September
Spain	14 – 17 October
Japan	11 –14 November

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ŠKODA Motorsport at Rallye Monte-Carlo 2021

Supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, Toksport WRT runs two ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo in the WRC2 category of the FIA World Rally Championship 2021

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA Motorsport at Rallye Monte-Carlo 2021

Supported by ŠKODA Motorsport, Norwegians Andreas Mikkelsen and Ola Fløene drive a Toksport WRT entered ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo and are among the top favourites for a WRC2 category win at the opening round of the FIA World Rally Championship 2021

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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ŠKODA Motorsport at Rallye Monte-Carlo 2021

Newcomers Marco Bulacia/Marcelo Der Ohannesian (BOL/ARG) compete in WRC2 with a ŠKODA FABIA Rally2 evo, run by Toksport WRT with the support from ŠKODA Motorsport

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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 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.