



Volkswagen in Customer Sport

Competitive debut in Spain – Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 set for its first race on gravel and asphalt

- **Doubly tough test: Polo GTI R5 to make its debut at the Rally Spain**
- **Homologation on 01 October: Longer tests to ensure fully-developed customer car**

Wolfsburg (26 April 2018). The ideal rally, at which to make a debut: Volkswagen will make its first competitive outing with the Polo GTI R5 at the Rally Spain (25 to 28 October 2018). The 200-kW (272-PS) car for customers competing in rallies around the world – such as those in the WRC 2 category, the European Rally Championship and national championships – will be given a baptism of fire at the most diverse rally in the FIA World Rally Championship. The event in Catalonia is held on both asphalt and gravel, with the teams given just 75 minutes to completely convert the chassis and many other components. For Volkswagen, the Rally Spain also represents the perfect event from another perspective: The manufacturer went undefeated on each of the four occasions that the Polo R WRC took to the route here in the top echelon of the World Rally Championship, and it was here that the brand claimed its first title in the Manufacturers' Championship in 2013.

"The Rally Spain is a very happy stomping ground for us," said Sven Smeets, Volkswagen Motorsport Director. "We celebrated our first world championship title here. You simply don't forget moments like that. With its varying surfaces, the Rally Spain is obviously also excellently suited to a first really tough test under competitive conditions."

Dawn of a new era in rallying: The Polo GTI R5 for customer sport

Volkswagen achieved an awful lot in just four years in the World Rally Championship – 12 titles, 43 of a possible 52 race wins, and 640 stage wins. With the Polo GTI R5, Volkswagen is now embarking on a new chapter in rallying, with the goal being to add to that successful record – in customer sport. As such, Spain has been carefully selected for the debut. It gives the engineers a little more time to ensure the car is fully and optimally developed. Originally planned for late summer, the homologation has now been put back by a few weeks to 01 October 2018. "The tests have gone well. The drivers who have tested the Polo GTI R5 have given very positive feedback," says Smeets. "Despite this, we still want to change a few things before the car is finally homologated."

Gerard Jan de Jongh, Technical Project Lead Polo GTI R5 and world champion Sébastien Ogier's former race engineer, adds: "A customer car must almost be developed even more thoroughly than a World Rally Car for a works team. Once the car has been successfully homologated, a customer often does not have the opportunity to make any changes or test



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the car thoroughly. For this reason, we are taking the time to ensure that we supply our customers with a fully-developed and fast Polo GTI R5 in October."





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