



# ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 1 of 4

## ŠKODA kicks off the 2016 motorsport year with the WRC 2 event in Sweden

- › Works drivers Pontus Tidemand (S), Jan Kopecký (CZ) and Esapekka Lappi (FIN) line up for ŠKODA again in 2016
- › Co-driver Jonas Andersson (S) strengthens the ŠKODA Motorsport family
- › Hrabánek: "We want to exceed last year's success"

Mladá Boleslav, 8 January 2016 – ŠKODA kicks off the 2016 motorsport year with the WRC 2 rally in Sweden (11th to 14th February). Like last season, the three works drivers Pontus Tidemand (S), Jan Kopecký (CZ) and Esapekka Lappi (FIN) will set their sights on winning titles for ŠKODA in the Fabia R5 rally car. New to the ŠKODA team is experienced co-driver Jonas Andersson (S), who is charged with guiding Asia-Pacific champion Tidemand to more success. The ŠKODA Motorsport team is particularly focussed on its appearance in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The experienced Kopecký also lines up in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), where he will be hungry to repeat last year's triumph.

"We had an extremely successful first year with our new ŠKODA Fabia R5 in 2015. The fourth title in a row in the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship, four wins in the WRC 2 class of the World Rally Championship and five national titles exceeded our expectations," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. "It goes without saying that we continued to work hard through the winter break with the ŠKODA team, and are looking forward to an eventful year of rallying with our fast and reliable Fabia R5 in 2016. Our goal is to exceed last year's success in the WRC 2 with our three impressive drivers, Pontus Tidemand, Jan Kopecký and Esapekka Lappi. We would like to welcome Jonas Andersson to our ŠKODA racing family."

Andersson is one of the most experienced co-drivers in the world and has enjoyed great success in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in recent years. He will make his competitive debut alongside Swedish ŠKODA driver Tidemand at their home rally in Sweden. "We have already done a lot of testing together and can hardly wait to finally get started," said Tidemand. Andersson has a clear goal for his first start in the ŠKODA works team: "We really want to be among the front-runners!"

Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) line up as the second ŠKODA works duo at the second round of the WRC 2 season in the Swedish snow. Last year, the 2014 European champion contributed two WRC 2 victories to the ŠKODA Motorsport team's impressive record, ending the season third overall in WRC 2. This year, the goal is to surpass last season's excellent effort. Lappi: "We still have room for improvement. We obviously want to challenge for the WRC 2 title."



# ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 2 of 4

Jan Kopecký und Pavel Dresler also have title ambitions. The all-Czech duo won the title in the Czech Rally Championship with a flawless record of five wins from five starts in 2015 and would love to repeat this remarkable success in 2016. Like the other ŠKODA Motorsport pairings, Kopecký and Dresler will also be in action at a number of rounds of the WRC 2 championship, in which he won one rally last year. "We are looking forward to the challenges we will face in WRC 2 and the MČR this year," said Kopecký. "We have the perfect tool at our disposal, in the form of the ŠKODA Fabia R5. The goal is to tease even more out of the car in 2016."

As in 2015, the high-tech, four-wheel drive powerhouse will this year sport the imposing green, black and white ŠKODA Motorsport livery, which thrilled fans around the world last year. "We promise our fans that we will do everything in our power to continue ŠKODA Motorsport's successful run in 2016," said ŠKODA Motorsport director Hrabánek.

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### ŠKODA in the 2016 season

Asia-Pacific champion Pontus Tidemand (S) will line up alongside co-driver Jonas Andersson (S) this season.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA in the 2016 season

Experienced Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) have their sights set on defending their title in the Czech Rally Championship in 2016.

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# ŠKODA Motorsport

, Page 3 of 4



## ŠKODA in the 2016 season

Works duo Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) have lofty ambitions for 2016 after finishing third overall in the WRC 2 in 2015.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## ŠKODA Motorsport Overview:

ŠKODA has been 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 numerous title wins in the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), 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.

In 2015, ŠKODA celebrated four victories in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with their new ŠKODA Fabia R5 rally car. The high-tech 4x4 was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. In the ŠKODA Fabia R5's very first season, factory duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) secured the fourth APRC title in a row for ŠKODA. In addition, the brand brought in five national titles with their new winning model.

ŠKODA's new Fabia R5 proudly continues the brand's long tradition in motorsport. Its predecessor, the Fabia Super 2000, was the most successful model in ŠKODA's 115-year motorsport history. With the 4x4 from Mladá Boleslav, factory duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the historic feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the drivers' title in the ERC and the APRC in consecutive years. Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000 drivers won a total of 50 national and international titles around the world.

In 2016, the factory teams Pontus Tidem and/Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (F/F) are competing with the ŠKODA Fabia R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).



# ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 4 of 4

## ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle production companies in the world. In 1895, the Czech headquarters in Mladá Boleslav began producing bicycles, followed by the production of motorbikes and cars.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: Citigo, Fabia, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- > in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- > has belonged to Volkswagen since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful automotive groups 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 and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- > employs over 25,900 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.