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Special day for ŠKODA: Lappi claims maiden WRC 2 victory in new Fabia R5

- › Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm win the WRC 2 class at the Rally Poland
- › Second works duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson complete one-two
- › Michal Hrabánek: "Reward for the hard work put in by the ŠKODA Motorsport team"

Mikolajki, 5 July 2015 – Special day for ŠKODA: Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) claimed a historic first win for the new Fabia R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The European champions produced a commanding display to triumph at the Rally Poland. The second works crew of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) finished runner-up to complete a one-two at the flat-out festival in the Masurian lake district. The dominant ŠKODA drivers won 14 of 18 special stages in the Fabia R5. The maiden win came at the perfect location: ŠKODA has been the top-selling car brand in Poland for the last six years in a row.

"What a day for ŠKODA! We claimed our first win in only the third WRC 2 start with the new Fabia R5. Compliments to both teams – Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm, and Pontus Tidemand and Emil Axelsson. They were flawless for four days, even in that heat," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek, beaming with joy. "We had seen indications of the potential of our new rally car with three podiums from the first two WRC 2 starts. The first victory is a great reward for the hard work put in by everyone at ŠKODA Motorsport. It also gives us extra incentive to continue doing everything we can to achieve success."

The two ŠKODA drivers, Lappi and Tidemand, dominated the race on fast gravel roads with short asphalt sections, seemingly at will. About two thirds of the almost 300 kilometres against the clock were taken flat-out. The "Flying Finn" Esapekka Lappi moved into the lead on stage two, "Gorklo", courtesy of the stage win and a spectacular average speed of 126.45 km/h, and never looked back. This was win number two at the Rally Poland for Lappi/Ferm. Back in 2012, when the event still belonged to the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the duo had triumphed on their debut for ŠKODA Motorsport.

"What an amazing win! Thank you to the ŠKODA team for doing a perfect job. The Fabia R5 was just brilliant," said Lappi. "The win is also reward for a learning process. On Saturday and Sunday I managed to keep a cool head and control the race." At the end of the 18 special stages, the 24-year-old had a 56.1-second lead over team-mate Tidemand. The speedy Swede won seven special stages at the Rally Poland, as did his team-mate Lappi. "Congratulations to Esapekka! He was in a class of his own at this rally. We did as well as we possibly could, claiming our second podium on our second outing with the new Fabia R5," said Tidemand.



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Lappi and Tidemand had previously guided the four-wheel drive turbo powered car to second and third place when the Fabia R5 made its WRC debut in Portugal. ŠKODA duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) finished third in the WRC 2 class at the Rally Italy. Although ŠKODA has only competed at three of the season's seven rounds so in the FIA World Rally Championship, the top two drivers are already within striking distance of WRC 2 leader Jari Ketomaa (FIN/67 points) who had to settle for fourth place in Poland. Lappi is currently fifth on 45 points, ahead of Tidemand on 43. Former European champion Armin Kremer, who finished fifth at the wheel of a ŠKODA Fabia R5 at the Rally Poland, has 34 points to his name already.

Lappi/Ferm have little time to celebrate their win in Poland. The successful pair are set to make a guest appearance in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) next weekend. The Rally Bohemia is ŠKODA's home event in the region around the company headquarters in Mladá Boleslav. After three wins from three starts in the national championship, ŠKODA works driver Jan Kopecký (CZ) and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZ) have their sights set on continuing the Fabia R5's winning run.

The new car tasted more success this weekend in the German Rally Championship (DRM): ŠKODA AUTO Deutschland driver Fabian Kreim (D) triumphed ahead of fellow ŠKODA driver Mark Wallenwein (D). This was the second one-two in a row for the new ŠKODA Fabia R5.

Number of the day at the Rally Poland: 1

Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm presented ŠKODA with win number 1 for the Fabia R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The first success came at express speed: the new rally car was presented to the public for the first time on 15th April 2015. It has now taken its place on the very top step of the podium on only its third appearance in the WRC.

Rally Poland –WRC 2 result

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	2:32:02.6 hrs.
2. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 0:56.1 min.
3. Kruuda/Jarveoja (EST/EST), Citroën DS3 R5	+ 2:05.3 min.
4. Ketomaa/Lindstrom (FIN/FIN), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 4:54.1 min.
5. Kremer/Winklhofer (D/D), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 5:11.9 min.



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FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	22.01.-25.01.2015
Rally Sweden	12.02.-15.02.2015
Rally Mexico	05.03.-08.03.2015
Rally Argentina	23.04.-26.04.2015
Rally Portugal	21.05.-24.05.2015
Rally Italy	11.06.-14.06.2015
Rally Poland	02.07.-05.07.2015
Rally Finland	30.07.-02.08.2015
Rally Germany	20.08.-23.08.2015
Rally Australia	10.09.-13.09.2015
Rally France	01.10.-04.10.2015
Rally Spain	22.10.-25.10.2015
Rally Great Britain	12.11.-15.11.2015

For more information:

Karel Pokorný, Communications Motorsport

Tel. +420 604 292 191

Karel.Pokorny1@skoda-auto.cz

<http://www.skoda-auto.com/en/motorsport>

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ŠKODA at the Rally Poland

European champions Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) claim the maiden WRC 2 victory for ŠKODA with the new Fabia R5.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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ŠKODA at the Rally Poland

Pontus Tidemand (S) and Emil Axelsson (S) finished runner-up to complete a ŠKODA one-two.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been involved in the world of motorsport since 1901. The brand has taken home many trophies from the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and several famous races, such as the oldest rally in the world – the Monte Carlo, which has taken place annually since 1911.

The Fabia Super 2000 rally car is the most successful model in ŠKODA's 114-year history in motorsport. In 2014, ŠKODA won a hat-trick of titles in the Manufacturers' and Drivers' competitions in the APRC. The new reigning champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the momentous feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the Drivers' title in the ERC and then the APRC in consecutive years.

In the ERC, ŠKODA Motorsport took the title for the third time in a row in 2014, thanks to Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) with the ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000. Before Lappi, the Finn Juho Hänninen (2012) and Jan Kopecký (2013) had won the European title with the ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000.

Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000 drivers won nearly 50 national and international titles.

The International Automobile Federation FIA approved ŠKODA's new rally car - the Fabia R5 on 1 April, 2015. The new rally car was presented to the International Press in the Czech Republic on 15 April. The ŠKODA Fabia R5 celebrated its competitive début at the Šumava Rally, Czech Republic in 2015.



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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, Roomster, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- > in 2014 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide for the first time in a single year.
- > 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.