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Rally Corsica: ŠKODA and the Fabia R5 out to continue winning run in WRC 2

- › ŠKODA leads WRC 2 Team standings on the back of three WRC 2 wins in a row
- › Two ŠKODA works teams in action on Corsica: Lappi/Ferm and newly-crowned APRC champions Tidemand/Axelsson
- › ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek: "The next big challenge for our new Fabia R5"
- › "Rally of 10,000 Corners" on Corsica from 1st to 4th October

Mladá Boleslav, 29 September 2015 – ŠKODA heads to the Rally Corsica (1 to 4 October) with the new Fabia R5 on the back of three WRC 2 victories in succession. Armed with its new rally car, the Czech manufacturer will be pushing for more success at the eleventh round of the 13-round season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Lining up for ŠKODA are the two works crews of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) and Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S). Tidemand/Axelsson travel to the Mediterranean island as the newly-crowned champions of this year's Asia-Pacific Rally Championship.

"So far this season, the new Fabia R5 has consistently shown what it is capable of. We are out to continue our winning run on Corsica. The Rally Corsica will be a big challenge for our car and, above all, for our teams, who unfortunately have almost no experience of the special stages this time. Any mistakes are punished mercilessly," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek.

The 'Tour de Corse' is taking place for the 58th time this year, and is regarded as one of the most demanding rallies of all. A precision job is required on the narrow, winding mountain roads, some of which are flanked by steep rock faces on the one side and sea cliffs on the other side. Between Friday and Sunday, a total of nine special stages and over 330 kilometres against the clock must be completed against this breath-taking backdrop. As well as the two ŠKODA works duos, former European champion Armin Kremer (D) will also be in action in a ŠKODA Fabia R5.

"The rally on Corsica is a real challenge. We are in it to win. We are very motivated and know that we cannot afford to make any mistakes," said Esapekka Lappi. The Finn, currently fourth in the overall WRC 2 standings, already has two victories with the Fabia R5 to his name (Rally Poland and Rally Finland) in the current WRC 2 season. As the three crews ahead of him in the championship are not in action this weekend, a good result could see Lappi significantly close the gap to the leaders.

The ŠKODA works duo of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson are also well-placed in the WRC 2 championship. Tidemand travels to Corsica as the newly-crowned champion of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). The Swede wrapped up the APRC title with races still to come, courtesy of victory at the Rally Japan on the second weekend in



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September. This is the fourth APRC title in a row for a ŠKODA works driver – following in the footsteps of Chris Atkinson (AUS/2012), Gaurav Gill (IND/2013) and Jan Kopecký (CZ/2014).

ŠKODA Motorsport Director Hrabánek: "The entire ŠKODA team would like to congratulate Pontus Tidemand and Emil Axelsson on their title in the APRC. Despite being in their first season with ŠKODA Motorsport, they are both doing a superb job." Pontus Tidemand added: "Winning the APRC is a dream come true. I am now really looking forward to my next start in the World Rally Championship. The rally on Corsica will be like riding on the edge of a razor blade. Our goal is to finish on the podium. To achieve that, we must keep a cool head."

In its first season, the new ŠKODA Fabia R5 is proving to be a natural born winner. As well as the successful outings in the WRC 2, the new rally car already has three national championships to its name. Fabia R5 driver Jan Kopecký wasted no time in claiming the title in the Czech championship with five wins from five rallies. In Austria, the experienced Raimund Baumschlager won the national championship in his Fabia R5. In Hungary, Norberg Herczig (H) was crowned national rally champion in a Fabia R5.

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 Corsica	01.10.-04.10.2015
Rally Spain	22.10.-25.10.2015
Rally Great Britain	12.11.-15.11.2015



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Did you know ...

... ŠKODA Motorsport is the only team in this year's WRC 2 to win three races in a row? Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm triumphed in Poland and Finland, making them the only crew with two back-to-back WRC 2 wins to their name. Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler won the Rally Germany in dominant fashion at the wheel of the ŠKODA Fabia R5.

... ŠKODA Motorsport holds a commanding lead in the WRC 2 Team competition? The team has scored the maximum 125 points from five starts and currently lies 24 points ahead of the Youth and Sports Qatar Rally Team.

... ŠKODA works driver Esapekka Lappi is well-placed in fourth place in the WRC 2 Drivers' Championship, despite only having raced at half of the season's ten rallies so far? With 70 points, he trails leader Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q), who has contested one rally more than the Finn, by 27 points. 25 points are available for a win. A further ŠKODA works driver is currently sixth, in the form of Pontus Tidemand (61 points). He is followed in seventh place overall by a third driver for the successful Czech team – Jan Kopecký (40 points), who won in Germany.

... the French round of the World Rally Championship returns to the Mediterranean island of Corsica after a seven-year absence? In recent years, Alsace has hosted the home rally of three-time world champion Sébastien Ogier (F/Volkswagen). This year's event is officially called the "Tour de Corse Rallye de France".

... the "Tour de Corse" formed part of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) from 1973 to 2008? As such, this year's rally on Corsica is a first for the WRC 2. The championship was held for the first time in 2010.

... the Rally Corsica was held for the first time in 1956 and this year takes place for the 58th time? Some years, competitors had to complete over 1,000 kilometres against the clock. This year, that figure is just over 330 kilometres, spread over nine special stages.

... the iconic event on Corsica is also known as the "Rally of 10,000 Corners"? The majority of the route is on narrow, winding mountain roads, with rock faces on one side and steep cliffs on the other.

... the rally is notorious for its many punctures? The majority is held on rough, coarse asphalt, with the drivers often cutting the corners. This puts extreme strain on the tyres.

... the "Tour de Corse" has been a happy stomping ground for ŠKODA Motorsport? In 2013, Jan Kopecký finished runner-up en route to winning the title in the FIA European Rally Championship. Esapekka Lappi secured victory in the European Championship here in 2014.



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... the rally runs through all the regions of Corsica? The start and finish of the rally are located in Ajaccio, on the west coast. The overnight stop on Friday is in Bastia, in the north of the island. The crews then spend Saturday night in the southern town of Porto Vecchio. The service park is located in Corte, in the centre of the island.

... Corsica is the fourth-largest Mediterranean island and has a population of over 300,000? The highest mountain, Monte Cinto, is 2706 metres high.

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ŠKODA at the Rally Corsica

Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) already have two WRC 2 victories with the new Fabia R5 to their name this season.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Corsica

The second ŠKODA works duo of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) have finished on the WRC 2 podium three times in 2015.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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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.

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.