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Celebrations at the Rally Spain: ŠKODA Motorsport repeats 2015 one-two victory

- › In reverse order: this time around, Jan Kopecký won ahead of Pontus Tidemand
- › Recording 18 best times, the ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the outstanding car at one of the most challenging races in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › Three ŠKODA drivers still in with a chance of claiming the WRC 2 title
- › Michal Hrabánek: "Top performance from the whole team"

Salou, 16 October 2016 – Celebrations in the sunshine on the Costa Daurada: ŠKODA Motorsport has repeated the one-two victory from 2015 at the Rally Spain. After a dramatic duel over 321.08 kilometres, it was the Czech champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler who triumphed this time, 15,3 seconds ahead of the second works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S). Last year, it was Tidemand who had claimed victory ahead of Kopecký at one of the most challenging stops on the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) calendar.

"That was a top performance from the whole team! Regardless of whether they were on gravel or asphalt, in rain or sun - both our driving teams were totally concentrated at all times and neither of them took any unnecessary risks, despite battling one another for the win. The Rally Spain represents a unique challenge on the world championship calendar. This repeat of our one-two victory proves once again how much quality our FABIA R5 has," commented ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek, before looking ahead to the two remaining races of the WRC 2 season and adding: "We have made sure that we still have every chance in the battle for the title."

This battle for victory was a roller-coaster of emotions for the two ŠKODA works drivers and thrilled the tens of thousands of fans who lined the stages on the picturesque Costa Daurada for four days. Jan Kopecký had taken an early lead after winning Thursday's opening stage on wet streets in the pulsating metropolis of Barcelona. Team-mate Pontus Tidemand moved ahead on the muddy gravel stages as the torrential rain continued on Friday. However, on Saturday his 3.0-second advantage had disappeared quickly on asphalt - Kopecký overcame tyre problems to reclaim the lead and went into the final day 14.3 seconds ahead. On Sunday, the 34-year-old Czech driver successfully held off Tidemand's final attacks before throwing himself into delighted victory celebrations.

"This win at the Rally Spain is worth its weight in gold. After three second-place finishes in a row in the WRC 2, it was about time I got a win," commented Kopecký. The experienced driver celebrated his second win with the FABIA R5 in the WRC 2, having triumphed at the Rally Germany in 2015. In eight of the last nine WRC 2 races, victory has gone to a driver in the high-tech four-wheel drive car from the Czech manufacturer.



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Works driver Esapekka Lappi won his home rally in Finland and claimed victory in Germany. Victory in Mexico, on Sardinia and at the Rally Poland went to Teemu Suninen (FIN), while Nicolás Fuchs (PE) triumphed for ŠKODA at the Rally Argentina. Works driver Tidemand celebrated a win at the Rally Portugal.

However, he was unable to repeat his 2015 triumph in Spain. Tidemand: "It was a tough fight with Jan. I tried absolutely everything but he put on a great performance. Congratulations to Jan - the most important thing was to secure the one-two victory for ŠKODA."

Three ŠKODA drivers are still in with a chance of winning the WRC 2 title with two races remaining this season, in Great Britain and Australia. Teemu Suninen finished in fifth place in Spain, driving a FABIA R5 for a privateer team, and is in second place in the overall standings with 103 points. He is followed by the works drivers Esapekka Lappi (82) and Jan Kopecký (80). The two ŠKODA Motorsport drivers have only competed in five races this season and still each have two chances to collect 25 points for a win. Suninen can only record points one more time. The Rally Great Britain (27 to 30 October) will host the big showdown between all three ŠKODA title challengers. WRC 2 leader Elfyn Evans (GB/120 points) has already completed all seven races in which he can collect points for the overall standings this season.

Final standings Rally Spain (WRC 2):

1. Kopecký/Dresler (CZ/CZ)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	3:22:08.7 hrs
2. Tidemand/Andersson (S/S)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 0:15.3 min.
3. Turan/Zsiros (H/H)	Peugeot 208 R5	+ 14:54.1 min.
4. van den Heuvel/Dockx (NL/NL)	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X	+ 25:02.6 min.
5. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 29:09.0 min.

The number of the rally: 18

What a demonstration: the ŠKODA FABIA R5 was the fastest car in the WRC 2 class in 18 out of 19 special stages at the Rally Spain. Works driver Jan Kopecký delivered a convincing performance, recording the fastest time on twelve occasions. On the 38.95 kilometres of the longest special stage, "Terra Alta 1", he shared the fastest time with French driver Julien Maurin, who was competing in a FABIA R5 for a privateer team. Works drivers Pontus Tidemand (5) and Teemu Suninen (1), in a customer car, recorded the other best times for ŠKODA.



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FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	21.01.-24.01.2016
Rally Sweden	11.02.-14.02.2016
Rally Mexico	03.03.-06.03.2016
Rally Argentina	21.04.-24.04.2016
Rally Portugal	19.05.-22.05.2016
Rally Italy	09.06.-12.06.2016
Rally Poland	30.06.-03.07.2016
Rally Finland	28.07.-31.07.2016
Rally Germany	18.08.-21.08.2016
Rally China	08.09.-11.09.2016 (cancelled)
Rally France	29.09.-02.10.2016
Rally Spain	13.10.-16.10.2016
Rally Great Britain	27.10.-30.10.2016
Rally Australia	17.11.-20.11.2016

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ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Spain

On the Costa Daurada, Czech champions Jan Kopecký (CZ) and Pavel Dresler (CZ) celebrate their first win of the season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Spain

The second works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) completes the one-two victory for ŠKODA in the FABIA R5.

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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 FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), 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 claimed 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 Tidemand/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 AUTO

- › is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- › currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI, KODIAQ 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 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.