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Historic day for ŠKODA in the WRC 2: Lappi/Ferm claim World Champion title

- › ŠKODA works duo Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm clinch the drivers' and co-drivers' title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with victory at the Rally Australia
- › One of ŠKODA Motorsport's greatest successes in its 115-year history – victory in the team standings as well
- › ŠKODA FABIA R5 is the outstanding rally car in its class in 2016: 10 wins in 13 races in WRC 2
- › Michal Hrabánek: "A day of celebration for the ŠKODA brand"

Coffs Harbour, 20 November 2016 – Historic day for ŠKODA: The "Flying Finns" Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm are crowned World Champions. With their commanding victory at the Rally Australia, the ŠKODA works duo clinched the drivers' and co-drivers' title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for the first time and were over the moon as they climbed onto the roof of the winning FABIA R5 after crossing the finish line. ŠKODA Motorsport was also victorious in the team standings of the WRC 2 and with this triple title celebrates one of the greatest successes in its 115-year history.

"It is a day of celebration for the ŠKODA brand! I am proud of the entire ŠKODA Motorsport team. Naturally of Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm first and foremost, who rewarded the entire team for their fantastic performances this season here in the Australian heat. A big thank you also goes to the engineers and mechanics, without whom this success would not have been possible," said Michal Hrabánek. The ŠKODA Motorsport Director also views the success as confirmation of the development department of the Czech car manufacturer: "10 of the 13 races in the WRC 2 were won in the ŠKODA FABIA R5 this year. That says everything about the quality and speed of our rally car."

And the FABIA R5 was victorious again Down Under: With his victory at the season finale of the world championship in Australia, Esapekka Lappi catapulted himself to the top of the overall standings of the WRC 2 with 130 points and as champion becomes the successor of Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q). Second place in the drivers' standings went to Lappi's fellow Finn Teemu Suninen (120), who contested the season in a privateer ŠKODA FABIA R5. The championship victory is another milestone for ŠKODA: Juho Hänninen (FIN) was victorious in the S-WRC, the predecessor series of the WRC 2, in the ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 in 2011.

Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm's victory was never in doubt on the approximate 280 classified kilometres of the Rally Australia on difficult gravel tracks. With the best time on



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the first special stage on Friday, the Finns took the lead in the WRC 2 and extended it steadily with further top times. Despite the dust and the heat, Lappi maintained a clear view at the wheel, won a total of 22 of the 23 stages, and finished with an impressive advantage of 4:35.8 minutes over brand colleague Nicolás Fuchs (PE) in a privateer ŠKODA FABIA R5. Esapekka Lappi set further milestones with his fourth win in a row. He gifted the ŠKODA works team its tenth victory and 25th podium for the FABIA R5 in the WRC 2 since the new rally car made its debut at the Rally Portugal in May last year.

25-year-old Esapekka Lappi celebrates the greatest success of his career with the championship victory in the WRC 2. He clinched the European championship title in 2014, but this year's victory over the best drivers and cars in the WRC 2 class is to be rated even more highly. "I am over the moon. This is one of the biggest days in my life as a rally driver! The nervous tension ahead of the Rally Australia was high, but fortunately Janne and I kept a cool head throughout and clinched the deserved victory for the entire team. Thanks to the entire team at ŠKODA Motorsport, who always provided us with a perfect car. Now we can celebrate together," said Lappi.

Final standings at the Rally Australia (WRC 2):

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	2:53:38.0 hrs
2. Fuchs/Mussano (PE/ARG)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 4:35.8 min.
3. Ptaszek/Szczepaniak (PL/PL)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 6:42.9 min.

The number of the Rally Australia: 4

Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm celebrated their fourth win in a row in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) at the Rally Australia, thereby clinching the drivers' and co-drivers' title. The spectacular winning streak began at home on gravel in Finland at the end of July, then came a victory on asphalt at the Rally Germany. At the Rally Great Britain, Lappi and Ferm were also unbeatable on muddy tracks, before they were crowned champions in Australia. But the season didn't get off to a perfect start. Third place at the Rally Sweden was followed by ninth place at the Rally Italy on Sardinia and another third place at the Rally Poland. However, after that Lappi/Ferm were in a class of their own.



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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 WRC rally in Australia

Jump for the title: Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) clinched the drivers' and co-drivers' title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for the first time with their fourth victory in a row.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





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ŠKODA at the WRC rally in Australia

Esapekka Lappi was the focus of the media's attention after the greatest success of his career.

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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 Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers 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.