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ŠKODA teams extend their lead at the Rally Finland

- › **One-two: Esapekka Lappi continues to hold a commanding lead over Pontus Tidemand**
- › **ŠKODA Fabia R5 proves to be the best WRC 2 rally car at the fastest rally of the year**
- › **Only 28.26 kilometres stand between the team and their second WRC 2 win**

Jyväskylä, 1st August 2015 – ŠKODA put on a strong showing with the Fabia R5 on the penultimate day of the Rally Finland, winning all eight special stages and consolidating their position at the top of the overall standings. Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) go into the final day of their home event in a strong position, having built up a commanding lead over their team-mates Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) at the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Only 28.26 kilometres stand between the ŠKODA works team and their second successive World Championship victory.

“We were able to stay in control. There was no need to take any risks but we kept up the fast pace. I really like our Fabia R5 and everything about it worked perfectly,” noted Lappi. He was involved in a fascinating duel with his team-mate Tidemand, as the two drivers competed for the best times for each stage. The Swedish driver recorded the fastest time on four occasions, just bettering the achievement of reigning European champion Lappi. In special stage 12, both drivers clocked a time of 10:30.0 to share first place.

“This duel with Esapekka was a lot of fun and the results were often really tight. We also didn’t give it 100 per cent but it’s all about keeping a cool head,” said Tidemand. Despite their composed driving styles, the two ŠKODA works duos in their Fabias were able to increase their lead over the competition. The most surprising event of the day was not the rain showers falling from the grey skies above Jyväskylä, but the appearance of a bear with her two cubs. She was in the vicinity of the Horkka special stage and had to be led away to safety by a helicopter.

Sunday’s stages on the gravel are expected to be even more exciting, as the fastest rally of the year comes to a conclusion with two attempts at the Myhinpää special stage. ŠKODA is in the perfect position to repeat the historic achievements at the Rally Poland four weeks ago, by celebrating another one-two victory.



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Number of the day for the Rally Finland: 15

18 special stages have taken place so far at the Rally Finland, and ŠKODA has emerged victorious on 15 of these. This rally is providing clear proof that the Fabia R5 is the fastest car taking part in WRC 2. Esapekka Lappi posted the best time on ten stages, and Pontus Tidemand did so on four occasions. The ŠKODA works drivers also shared one first place, finishing with identical times.

Rally Finland – WRC 2 standings

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	2:26.53.2 hrs
2. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 1.23.3 min
3. Lefebvre/Prevot (F/B), Citroën DS3 RRC	+ 3.03.3 min
4. Protasov/Cherepin (UA/UA), Ford Fiesta S2000	+ 4.31.3 min
5. Pedder/Moscatt (AUS/AUS), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 6.12.9 min

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

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Since 2008, all evaluated ŠKODA models have received a 5-star safety rating from Euro NCAP.





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Media images:



ŠKODA at the Rally Finland:

Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) put on a show of concentration at "Formula One in the Forest" on Saturday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Finland:

On the penultimate day, the Swedish ŠKODA works team of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson delivered a convincing performance on their favourite stage, posting two best times on Mökkiperä.

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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.



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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.