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# ŠKODA Motorsport launches its campaign in the national championship at the Rally Šumava Klatovy

- › Last year's winners Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler out to repeat their success with the ŠKODA Fabia R5
- › Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson line up as the second ŠKODA works duo in West Bohemia
- › Michal Hrabánek: "Looking forward to appearing in front of the Czech fans"

**Mladá Boleslav/Klatovy, 25 April 2016 – ŠKODA Motorsport begins its title defence in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) at the 51<sup>st</sup> Rally Šumava Klatovy. Last year's champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ), in the ŠKODA Fabia R5, are out to repeat last year's success on the demanding routes in and around the Bohemian Forest. The second ŠKODA works duo of Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) will also make a guest appearance in the national championship on Friday and Saturday.**

"A year ago we celebrated a successful rally debut for our ŠKODA Fabia R5 with victory at the Rally Šumava Klatovy," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. "The success we have enjoyed around the world with our new rally car since then is confirmation of the great development work done by our team." However, Hrabánek is aware that this is no reason to rest on their laurels. "We are working hard to continue improving. Only that way will we have any chance of defending the title in our company's homeland. We are looking forward to the first appearance of 2016 in front of our home crowd."

The Rally Šumava Klatovy is the first of six races in the Czech Rally Championship. Like last year, when the ŠKODA Fabia R5 made its debut, thousands of rally fans are expected to line the 12 special stages, which feature roughly 150 kilometres against the clock. After victories here in 2012 and 2015, Jan Kopecký would love to win the iconic rally, which was first held in 1964, for the third time. "We obviously have fond memories of last year, when we drove the Fabia R5 here for the first time," said the experienced Kopecký. "However, it will not be easy to repeat this success: the opposition is even stronger than in 2015," said the 34-year-old.

Asia-Pacific champion Pontus Tidemand enjoyed a successful first outing with new co-driver Jonas Andersson in February, finishing second at the Rally Sweden. After his home race in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), 25-year-old Tidemand now lines up in the homeland of the ŠKODA brand. "Jonas and I are particularly looking forward to racing in front of the Czech fans," said Tidemand. "This spectacular rally is a real challenge, and also a great test for the next outings in the World Championship." From



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19 to 22 May, Tidemand/Andersson, Kopecký/Dresler and the third ŠKODA works duo of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) will be in action at the WRC round in Portugal.

In the Czech championship, Kopecký can look forward to a new instalment of last year's duel with rival Václav Pech (CZ). He will also receive tough competition from ŠKODA customer teams, such as Vojtěch Štajf/František Rajnoha (CZ/CZ). They also line up with the high-tech, four-wheel drive car that has enjoyed so much success around the world. Štajf races for the Klokočka ŠKODA Czech National Team.

### Czech Rally Championship (MČR)

| <u>Event</u>                | <u>Date</u>              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Rally Šumava Klatovy</b> | <b>29.04.–30.04.2016</b> |
| Rally Český Krumlov         | 27.05.–28.05.2016        |
| Rally Hustopeče             | 17.06.–18.06.2016        |
| Rally Bohemia               | 02.07.–03.07.2016        |
| Barum Czech Rally Zlín      | 26.08.–28.08.2016        |
| Rally Příbram               | 30.09.–01.10.2016        |

### Did you know ...

... the ŠKODA works team of Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler won eleven of the 12 special stages at last year's Rally Šumava Klatovy? In the end, the dominant duo marked the first rally outing of the Fabia R5 with a dominant victory, finishing 1:34.6 minutes ahead of second-placed Frenchman Bryan Bouffier.

... the ŠKODA Fabia R5 has already won five national titles and one continental championship within just one year of its launch? Pontus Tidemand triumphed at the Rally Longyou in China last October to be crowned champion of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). ŠKODA has been the manufacturer to beat in this prestigious championship for the last four years.

... Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler won the title in last year's Czech Rally Championship without suffering a single defeat? They were victorious at five out of five rallies with the ŠKODA Fabia R5.

... the schedule in the Czech Rally Championship is identical to last year's? The Rally Šumava Klatovy once again forms the first of six rounds. Other highlights of the national championship in 2016 include the Rally Bohemia, which represents ŠKODA's home rally around the company's headquarters in Mladá Boleslav, and the Barum Czech Rally Zlín, which also forms part of the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC).



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#### ŠKODA at the Rally Šumava Klatovy

Czech ŠKODA stars Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler claimed a dominant victory at last year's Rally Šumava Klatovy and went on to win the title in the national championship.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



#### ŠKODA at the Rally Šumava Klatovy

The Swedish ŠKODA works duo of Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson has already impressed this year with second place at their first outing of the season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The duo is now set for a guest appearance in the Czech championship.

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### 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 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, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- › delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide in 2015.
- › 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 such as engines and gear transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic. It also produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India, mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs more than 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

