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## Spectacular coup: exceptional talent Tidemand bolsters the ŠKODA Motorsport team

- › Pontus Tidemand (S) to line up for the ŠKODA Motorsport team in the future
- › He and co-driver Emil Axelsson (S) to compete in the APRC
- › New duo to make its works debut for ŠKODA at the Rally New Zealand

**Mladá Boleslav, 26 March 2015 – ŠKODA Motorsport has pulled off a spectacular coup: the exceptionally talented rally driver Pontus Tidemand (S) has signed a contract with the Czech car manufacturer. The former Junior World Rally Champion will drive a ŠKODA in the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). Tidemand and co-driver Emil Axelsson (S) will make their debut for the ŠKODA works team at the opening round of the APRC in New Zealand from 17th to 19th April.**

“Our team already boasts the Asia-Pacific champion Jan Kopecký and European champion Esapekka Lappi, who have performed impressively in recent years. To ensure we are even better positioned to succeed in the future, we have now added another very talented duo, in the form of Pontus Tidemand and Emil Axelsson,” said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek.

24-year-old Tidemand has already emphatically demonstrated his ability over the course of his still fledgling career. After success on the karting scene, he was crowned the youngest ever Swedish Rally Champion in 2011. In 2013 he claimed the title of Junior World Rally Champion, before catching the eye with a number of spectacular outings in the FIA World Rallycross Championship and WRC 2 last year. Tidemand and navigator Emil Axelsson tasted success on numerous occasions, including a class victory at the ADAC Rally Germany.

In signing for ŠKODA Motorsport, Tidemand is now taking the next step on the career ladder. “I am looking forward to the new challenge. I am proud that my name is now on the list of ŠKODA drivers – at one of the most successful manufacturers in rallying,” said Tidemand.

“We will do our utmost to be in contention for podiums and victories as soon as possible,” said experienced co-driver Axelsson (31). The duo already has experience with ŠKODA rally cars: in 2014, they won the Rally Finnskog in Norway in a Fabia Super 2000. They now line up at the opening round of the APRC in New Zealand in the very same model of car.

“We firmly believe in the extraordinary qualities of Pontus Tidemand and Emil Axelsson,” said Hrabánek: “We plan to have our team running the new ŠKODA Fabia R 5 in the APRC by the end of the year – after all, the season finale takes place in our most important market, China.”



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## For more information:

Karel Pokorný, Communications Motorsport

Ph. +420 604 292 191

[Karel.Pokorny1@skoda-auto.cz](mailto:Karel.Pokorny1@skoda-auto.cz)

<http://www.skoda-auto.com/en/motorsport>

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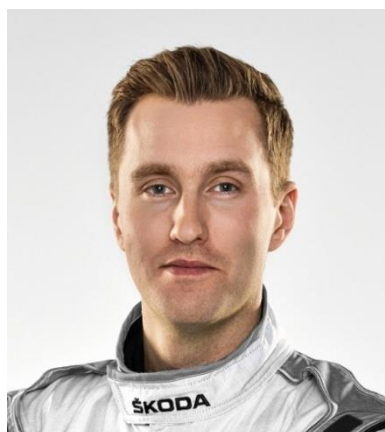


### Pontus Tidemand

New to the ŠKODA Motorsport team: the exceptionally talented Pontus Tidemand (S).

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### Emil Axelsson

Together with co-driver Emil Axelsson, Tidemand will line up in this year's FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC).

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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 a total of 28 national titles worldwide.

As of 2015, the ŠKODA Fabia R 5 will be taking over the reins from the Super 2000 and continuing ŠKODA's success story in motorsport. A global audience was given a first glimpse of ŠKODA's future rally car with the R 5 concept car at the 2014 Essen Motor Show.

## 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 has seven passenger car models: Citigo, Fabia, Roomster/Praktik, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- > in 2014 delivered more than one million vehicles to customers around the world 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. It also manufactures 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.