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## ŠKODA duos on track to finish on the podium in the Fabia R5 at the Rally de Portugal

- > "Flying Finn" Lappi gets first three stage best times in the new high-tech rocket
- > Lappi second, Tidemand third in the WRC 2 standings ahead of the final day
- > Big final on Sunday with legendary Fafe stage in front of 100,000 fans

**Porto, 23 May 2015 – After a strong performance, two ŠKODA duos in the new Fabia R5 are heading for the podium in the WRC 2 standings of the Rally de Portugal. European champions Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) got the first three stage best times on Saturday on the new rally car's first start in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). Going into the final day, this sees "Flying Finn" Lappi in second place in the overall standings, directly ahead of the second ŠKODA team Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S).**

"We are delighted with how the WRC debut in the new Fabia R5 is developing for us so far. But our main aim is to finish the rally," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. On the hardest day of the Rally de Portugal with 165.40 kilometres scheduled, on the winding gravel tracks around Porto, the high-tech four-wheel drive showed how much potential it has. Right on the first stage, Baião 1, Lappi got the historic first WRC best time in the new ŠKODA Fabia R5, 4.2 seconds faster than his team-mate Tidemand.

"Yesterday we had stones, today sand; the conditions were totally different to Friday. But I'm getting more and more used to my new tool during my first rally in the new Fabia R5. This also helped us move up in the overall standings," said the Finn. He demonstrated this on the other two special stages in the morning, which saw him clinch a hat-trick of best times in the WRC 2 standings.

Thanks to his gala performance, Lappi moved up from fifth at the start of the day into second in the overall standings. The 24-year-old will start the final day with a deficit of 49.0 seconds to Dakar winner Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q). 16.1 seconds behind Lappi is Tidemand in third place. "We defended our third place in our first race in the new Fabia R5. We can be pleased with that for now. We won't risk everything here," said Tidemand.

A further 54.65 kilometres over three special stages are scheduled for the big final day. This includes two passes of the legendary "Fafe" stage, with a massive leap as the highlight, which is expected to draw 100,000 spectators.



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## The number of the day for the Rally de Portugal: 12:24.5

Esapekka Lappi got the historic first best time in the WRC 2 standings of the WRC for the ŠKODA Fabia R5. The "Flying Finn" mastered the 18.57 kilometres of the special stage Baião 1 in 12:24.5 minutes.

## Rally de Portugal – Intermediate standings WRC 2

1. Al-Attiyah/Baumel (Q/F), Ford Fiesta S2000	3:04:56.4 hrs.
2. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 0:49.0 min.
3. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 1:05.1 min.
4. Lefebvre/Prévot (F/F), Citroën DS3 R5	+ 2:32.8 min.
5. Maurin/Klinger (F/F), Ford Fiesta S2000	+ 2:51.2 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
<b>Rally Portugal</b>	<b>21.05.–24.05.2015</b>
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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rating from  
Euro NCAP.





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## Media images:



### The new ŠKODA Fabia R5 at the Rally de Portugal

European champions Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) shone on Saturday with the first three best times for the new Fabia R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### The new ŠKODA Fabia R5 at the Rally de Portugal

The new ŠKODA duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) defended their third place in the WRC 2 standings.

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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 a total of 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 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.