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## Two podium positions: ŠKODA celebrates brilliant WRC debut with the Fabia R5

- › **European Champion Lappi second in WRC 2 at the Rally de Portugal ahead of team-mate Tidemand**
- › **First five stage best times in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for new Fabia R5 – endurance test over 324.18 km mastered**
- › **Hrabánek: "Very successful weekend for ŠKODA"**

**Porto, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – European Champion Esapekka Lappi (FIN) second, Pontus Tidemand (S) in third: ŠKODA celebrated a brilliant WRC debut with its new Fabia R5 at the Rally de Portugal. The new ŠKODA rally car not only mastered the endurance test over 324.18 kilometres successfully, but also showed signs of its great potential with its first five stage best times in the WRC 2 category of the FIA World Rally Championship.**

"My thanks go to the whole team that coped so well with the double challenge of starting in the World Rally Championship and the Czech Rally Championship. Our Fabia R5 worked perfectly in both rallies. It was a very successful weekend for ŠKODA!," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek after the first WRC start for his team in more than two years. On Saturday, Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) were victorious at the 43rd edition of the Rally Český Krumlov after a real last-minute thriller. It was the second win for the new ŠKODA Fabia R5 at the second event in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR).

Then on Sunday, 2000 kilometres away, the ŠKODA duos Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN) and Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S) secured the first two WRC podium finishes in the new Fabia R5. There was excitement once again in the battle for the win in WRC 2 on the final day, when Lappi finished 41.0 seconds faster than front-runner Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q) on the penultimate special stage "Vieira do Minho". However, the Dakar winner brought home a 12.0-second advantage over European Champion Lappi in the overall standings.

"We are delighted with second place, after all it was our first ever rally in the ŠKODA Fabia R5. Our new tool was convincing in all conditions here in Portugal – whether on gravel or on the short asphalt sections," said "Flying Finn" Lappi, full of praise, who got the fastest time in the WRC 2 category on five stages. "It's brilliant starting in the WRC again. The atmosphere was fantastic." Hundreds of thousands of spectators lined all 15 of the special stages at the Rally Portugal, with the absolute highlight being the legendary "Fafe" stage with its massive jump on Sunday. Lappi ended the day with another best time here.

"It was great fun. We gained so much fantastic experience on the rally debut in the new Fabia R5," said Tidemand. The new ŠKODA works driver now returns to the Asia-Pacific



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Rally Championship (APRC), where he is eager to defend his leading position in the overall standings from 19 to 21 June at the rally in Australia.

At the next FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) event from 11 to 14 June on Sardinia, alongside European Champion Lappi, reigning Asia-Pacific Champion Jan Kopecký will also take the wheel of a Fabia R5. Michal Hrabánek: "After the successful debut at the Rally Portugal, we are already looking forward to the next challenge. After all, we are only just getting started with the Fabia R5 project and still have plenty of work ahead of us."

## The number of the day for the Rally de Portugal: 5

In Portugal, Esapekka Lappi got the first five stage best times in the WRC 2 standings of the WRC for the ŠKODA Fabia R5. After he topped the results list for special stages eight to ten on Saturday, he was the fastest on special stage 15 "Vieira do Minho" on Sunday. This saw him finish an impressive 41.0 seconds faster than WRC 2 winner Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q). The "Flying Finn" was also number 1 on the legendary "Fafe" stage.

## Rally de Portugal – Final result WRC 2

1. Al-Attiyah/Baumel (Q/F), Ford Fiesta S2000	3:41:35.3 hrs.
2. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 0:12.0 min.
3. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 0:37.8 min.
4. Maurin/Klinger (F/F), Ford Fiesta S2000	+ 2:51.2 min.
5. Lefebvre/Prévot (F/F), Citroën DS3 R5	+ 2:59.6 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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### The new ŠKODA Fabia R5 at the Rally de Portugal:

European champions Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) topped off their rally debut in the new Fabia R5 with five best times in WRC 2 and second place in the overall standings.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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

The new ŠKODA duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) also made it onto the podium in third place in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).

[Download](#)

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

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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.

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.