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ŠKODA drivers flying at the front at the Rally Italy

- › Jan Kopecký (CZ) fights his way into third place in the WRC 2 overall standings on Sardinia and is fighting for a podium finish on his WRC return
- › European Champion Esapekka Lappi wins three special stages in the ŠKODA Fabia R5 on Saturday – victory on the legendary "Micky's Jump"
- › After the record Saturday, a further 45.80 km are in store on the final day

Alghero, 13 June 2015 – ŠKODA works drivers Jan Kopecký (CZ) and Esapekka Lappi (FIN) flew forward on the "flight day" at the Rally Italy. Asia-Pacific Champion Kopecký worked his way up into third in the overall standings of WRC 2 and is fighting for a podium finish on his comeback to the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). European Champion Esapekka Lappi won three special stages in the new ŠKODA Fabia R5 on the longest leg of the WRC season, which covered more than 212 kilometres of stages - including the two stages with the legendary "Micky's Jump".

"Loads of spectators, great tracks, spectacular leaps - it was a great Saturday at the Rally Italy. We showed the potential of this ŠKODA Fabia R5," said Lappi. On the first pass of the 42.22 kilometres of the longest special stage "Monte Lerno", the 24-year-old and co-driver Janne Ferm (FIN) distanced themselves from second-placed Ukrainian Yuri Protasov by 25.7 seconds. Lappi was also by far the fastest driver in WRC 2 on the second pass. As he hurtled around the stage, the "Flying Finn" also mastered "Micky's Jump" successfully, where the drivers in their rally cars fly distances of up to 40 metres.

Lappi, who missed out on any chance of winning after colliding with a stone on Friday, flew up the field from position 26 in the WRC 2 overall standings at the start of the day into tenth place. Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZ) were also quick in temperatures of up to 40 degrees. "We tried to drive fast without taking any major risks. It wasn't easy since there were lots of big stones on the track," said the 33-year-old old hand. "My aim is to go home with a good position after my appearance in Sardinia."

The final four special stages on Sunday see just 45.80 kilometres left to go on the feared gravel tracks of the Mediterranean island of Sardinia.



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Number of the day for the Rally Italy: 16

Esapekka Lappi moved up 16 positions in the overall standings of WRC 2 on Saturday. After the Finn lost almost half an hour on Friday, he was one of the fastest drivers on Saturday. Lappi got the best time on special stages 13 (Coiluna – Loelle 1), 14 and 19 (Monte Lerno 1 and 2). This makes it ten special stages that the Finn has won in WRC 2 this year.

Rally Italy – Intermediate standings WRC 2

1. Protasov/Cherepin (UA/UA), Ford Fiesta RRC	4:08:16.3 hrs.
2. Andreucci/Andreussi (I/I), Peugeot 208 T16	+ 0:07.0 min.
3. Kopecký/Dresler (CZ/CZ), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 1:58.4 min.
4. Al Rajhi/Orr (SA/GB), Ford Fiesta RRC	+ 2:56.4 min.
5. Fuchs/Misano (CH/RA), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 6:06.5 min.
10. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 31:15.5 min.

FIA World Rally Championship 2 (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 Italy on Sardinia:

European Champions Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) were convincing on Saturday with three best times.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Italy on Sardinia:

Asia-Pacific Champions Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) work their way up into third in the overall 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 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.