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## Rally Italy: Third place for Jan Kopecký in the ŠKODA Fabia R5

- › Third podium in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for ŠKODA's new rally car
- › Esapekka Lappi wins seven special stages on Sardinia and finishes ninth to pick up more World Championship points
- › Michal Hrabánek: "Team put up a great fight at a tough rally"

**Alghero, 14 June 2015 – Second rally, third podium: Jan Kopecký (CZ) continued the new ŠKODA Fabia R5's successful run in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The works driver overcame a time penalty to finish third at the demanding Rally Italy. European champion Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won seven special stages on the gravel roads of the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, demonstrating the huge potential of ŠKODA's new, high-tech four-wheel drive car.**

"The team put up a great fight at what was perhaps the toughest rally of the year on the WRC calendar. The podium is just reward for the effort. However, I am equally pleased that we successfully came through this tough test with both ŠKODA Fabia R5s," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. He reserved special praise for the pairing of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN): "We really appreciate that they were able to repair the damage to their car by themselves on Friday, and then to continue the fight. That allowed us to demonstrate how competitive our ŠKODA Fabia R5 is."

Just short of 400 kilometres against the clock on stony gravel roads, in scorching heat and with massive jumps – unlike a number of rival cars, ŠKODA's new rally car was up to this huge challenge. Jan Kopecký (CZ) and his co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZ) shrugged off a 1:40-minute penalty on Friday to fight their way back into third place. That made 33-year-old Kopecký the third ŠKODA works driver to earn a place on the WRC 2 podium with the new Fabia R5. Lappi and Puntus Tidemand (S) had previously finished second and third on the new car's WRC debut at the Rally Portugal three weeks ago.

"A lot of stones on the road, dust, high temperatures – that really was an extremely demanding rally. That makes me even more pleased to have claimed a spot on the podium here on Sardinia. However, it could have been an even better week for us – the time penalty was our mistake," said Kopecký. He claimed his first stage win in WRC 2.

"Flying Finn" Esapekka Lappi topped the times list on Sardinia on no less than seven occasions – including twice on the "Monte Lerno" stage, which, at 42.22 kilometres, was the longest stage of the rally and featured the legendary "Micky's Jump". The drivers fly up to 40 metres through the air after this crest, and Lappi left many of the higher-spec WRC cars in his wake on the second run of "Monte Lerno", finishing fifth overall. "The ŠKODA Fabia R5 is very quick and we are still yet to tap into its full potential. That makes



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it all the more bitter that a collision with a stone cost us any chance of a top position in the overall standings," said the 24-year-old.

Lappi and his co-driver Janne Ferm lost almost half an hour as a result of necessary repairs. However, they then launched a captivating fightback from 26<sup>th</sup> place to finish an impressive ninth in the WRC 2 standings at the Rally Italy. That was sufficient to earn ŠKODA's regular driver in the World Championship another two points towards the overall WRC 2 standings.

The next challenge on the grand WRC 2 stage comes in the form of the Rally Poland on 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> July. Before then, Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler will be back in business on Friday and Saturday: the Czech duo lines up on home soil at the Rally Hustopeče. Having previously claimed two wins from two races in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), they have their sights set on adding the next chapter to the new ŠKODA Fabia R5's success story.

### The number for the Rally Italy: 3

Three ŠKODA Fabia R5s were in action at the Rally Italy, and all three finished in the top nine of the WRC 2 standings. Works driver Jan Kopecký finished third to claim a spot on the podium despite a time penalty. Armin Kremer (D) ended the rally in sixth place in a customer racing car. Esapekka Lappi recovered from a huge loss of time to fight his way back into ninth place.

### Rally Italy –WRC 2 Result

1. Protasov/Cherepin (UA/UA), Ford Fiesta RRC	4:40:52.0 hrs
2. Andreucci/Andreussi (I/I), Peugeot 208 T16	+ 0:05.6 min
3. Kopecký/Dresler (CZ/CZ), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 2:44.0 min
4. Al Kuwari/Clark (Q/GB), Ford Fiesta RRC	+ 6:34.7 min
5. Al-Attiyah/Baumel (Q/F), Ford Fiesta RRC	+ 6:42.6 min
9. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 26:30.3 min



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## 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
<b>Rally Italy</b>	<b>11.06.-14.06.2015</b>
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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#### ŠKODA at the Rally Italy on Sardinia

Works duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) kept a cool head to finish third overall.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



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## ŠKODA at the Rally Italy on Sardinia

Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) impressed with some mighty jumps and a succession of stage wins in the new ŠKODA Fabia R5.

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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.

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.



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## 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.