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Success for ŠKODA: Lappi wins in Finland to take WRC 2 lead

- › Esapekka Lappi claims dominant home win, ahead of ŠKODA team-mate Pontus Tidemand
- › Second one-two in a row for the ŠKODA Fabia R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek: "Confirmation that the team's hard work is paying off"

Jyväskylä, 2nd August 2015 – Another historic milestone for the new ŠKODA Fabia R5: Esapekka Lappi (FIN) moved to the top of the overall standings in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), courtesy of a dominant win on home soil at the Rally Finland. After a dazzling display at "Formula One in the Forest", the "Flying Finn" and co-driver Janne Ferm (FIN) triumphed ahead of the second ŠKODA works team of Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S). This was the second one-two in a row for the ŠKODA works team – just four weeks after the historic first WRC victory at the Rally Poland.

"A great day for ŠKODA! This is another confirmation that the team's hard work is paying off. Our new Fabia R5 once again ran perfectly for the full 320 kilometres of special stage at the fastest rally of the year," said Michal Hrabánek. The ŠKODA Motorsport Director saved particular praise for the two driver/co-driver pairings: "At the Rally Finland, you need to drive skilfully and show courage and nerves of steel. Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm and Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson once again showed their class. Top spot in the WRC 2 table gives us another boost of motivation ahead of the coming rallies."

The 25 points for their success in Finland have catapulted Esapekka Lappi to first place in the Drivers' Championship – although ŠKODA has only contested half of the eight rounds of the WRC season so far. Lappi now leads with 70 points, followed by his compatriot Jari Ketomaa (67). In third place is the second ŠKODA driver, Pontus Tidemand (61). "It is obviously awesome to lead the WRC 2 standings. Above all, however, I am delighted to win my home rally. It is really special to win this WRC classic in front of so many fans. We drove perfectly, had perfect pace notes and a perfect car. I would like to thank the entire ŠKODA team," said an overjoyed Lappi.

The 24-year-old was the outstanding driver in a dominant Fabia R5. On his way to victory he twice won the iconic Ouninpohja stage, which, with more than 70 jumps, is seen as the ultimate test of courage in the world of rallying. Clocking an average speed of 127.13 kilometres per hour, Lappi emphatically proved why the Rally Finland is also known as "Formula One in the Forest". The ŠKODA Fabia R5 won 17 of the 20 special stages, making it the clear number one in the WRC 2 competition.

"Top speed all the way, lots of jumps, thousands of fans at every stage – the Rally Finland is a real highlight in the rallying calendar. Luckily for us, the Fabia R5 is the



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perfect car," said Tidemand. "Second place was the best result we could have hoped for here. Congratulations to Esapekka and Janne." Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm will be chasing more victories and FIA World Rally Championship titles in two and a half weeks. The Rally Germany from 21st to 23rd August is the next challenge, and the second ŠKODA works team will be represented by Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ).

Pontus Tidemand and Emil Axelsson are returning to the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), and will be competing in Malaysia in two weeks' time. With two victories and one second-place finish already, the ŠKODA works drivers have a commanding lead in the overall APRC standings.

Number of the day for the Rally Finland: 7

Seven podiums from just four starts in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) – that is the impressive record achieved by ŠKODA with the new Fabia R5. The car's debut at the Rally Portugal ended with second and third place for Esapekka Lappi and Pontus Tidemand. The third works driver, Jan Kopecký (CZ) then finished third to claim his spot on the podium at the Rally Italy. This was followed by a one-two for Lappi and Tidemand in Poland, and now a repeat of that result in Finland.

Rally Finland – WRC 2 Result

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN), ŠKODA Fabia R5	2:40:15.0 hrs
2. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 1:41.0 min
3. Lefebvre/Prevot (F/B), Citroën DS3 RRC	+ 3:31.5 min
4. Protasov/Cherepin (UA/UA), Ford Fiesta S2000	+ 4:58.3 min
5. Pedder/Moscatt (AUS/AUS), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 6:45.6 min



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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
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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ŠKODA at the Rally Finland:

Esapekka Lappi (FIN) and Janne Ferm (FIN) claimed their second win in a row to move to the top of the overall WRC 2 standings.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Finland:

Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) finished runner-up in the Fabia R5, as they did in Poland.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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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 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.

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.