



ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 1 of 5

ŠKODA remains on course for victory at Rally Spain

- › ŠKODA Motorsport first and second going into final day of the WRC rally
- › Tidemand/Axelsson continue to lead Kopecký/Dresler
- › Lappi/Ferm crash out on Saturday morning
- › Four ŠKODA Fabia R5s in the top five of the WRC 2 class

Salou/Spain, 24 October 2015 – ŠKODA works duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) go into the final day of the Rally Spain leading the field in their Fabia R5. The Swedes take a 30.1-second lead over team-mates Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) into the final 76.4 kilometres against the clock. In contrast, the third ŠKODA works duo of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) were forced to abandon any hopes of winning the WRC 2 class: the 2014 European rally champions crashed out of the penultimate round of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) on stage eleven on Saturday morning.

Day three of the rally on the Costa Daurada began with a major adjustment for the drivers and teams at the 51st Rally Spain. While the majority of Friday's eight special stages was held on gravel roads, Saturday featured 123.05 kilometres of asphalt special stage. The mechanics took full advantage of a 75-minute service on Friday evening to make the necessary modifications to the three ŠKODA Fabia R5 works cars, converting the high-tech four-wheel drive powerhouse from Mladá Boleslav from a rally car into a racing car with a far lower set-up.

Pontus Tidemand had no problem adapting to the changes. The Asia-Pacific champion avoided taking any risks and focussed on managing his lead. "This rally is great fun, and we are really enjoying driving here," said Tidemand. "The special stages are just great. After the Rally Sweden, this is definitely my favourite rally. The most important thing for me this weekend is to reach the finish in one piece. I want to score as many points as possible for the team, whilst at the same time gaining as much experience as possible on these asphalt routes. I am looking forward to the final day!"

Jan Kopecký claimed the most stage wins on Saturday. The asphalt specialist won four of the eight special stages to close the gap to Tidemand, although a problem with the steering in the morning did cost him over a minute. "Fortunately, Pavel and I were able to solve the problem with the power steering quickly by ourselves after the tenth stage," said Kopecký, who is racing for the ŠKODA Motorsport II team in Spain. "These things happen at rallies. As soon as we got it fixed, we immediately showed just how fast the ŠKODA Fabia R5 is with four stage wins in a row. Let's see, maybe we can still catch Pontus and Emil on Sunday."

Esapekka Lappi was not a happy man after his crash. "The crash was entirely my fault," said the European champion. "I feel really sorry for the team. The guys have once again given me a superb car this weekend. This obviously means I can no longer win the



ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 2 of 5

WRC 2 championship. However, the team is in with a great chance of winning the Team competition. There is no doubt about it: Janne and I will have our fingers crossed on Sunday for a ŠKODA victory here in Spain!"

Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q), who leads the WRC 2 championship and is at the wheel of a Fabia R5 from the ŠKODA customer racing programme at the Rally Spain, remains in fourth place (+ 3:46.7 minutes). Just 24.4 seconds behind him is Armin Kremer (D), also in a ŠKODA Fabia R5.

Number of the day: 2.24

Saturday's rally action drew to a close with a special stage in the rally centre of Salou. Not far from the Service Park, cheered on by thousands of thrilled spectators, the drivers took on a 2.24-kilometre asphalt route – the shortest stage of the 51st Rally Spain. As such, the spectator stage was not much longer than the "Dragon Khan" rollercoaster in the neighbouring "PortAventura" theme park, which is a proud 1.285 kilometres long and – unlike the aforementioned special stage – features three loop-the-loops.

Rally Spain –WRC 2 Standings

1. Tidemand/Axelsson (S/S), ŠKODA Fabia R5	2h 42m 9.0s
2. Kopecký/Dresler (CZ/CZ), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 30.1s
3. Camilli/Veillas (F/F), Ford Fiesta R5	+ 1m 30.2s
4. Al-Attiyah/Baumel (Q/F), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 3m 46.7s
5. Kremer/Winklhofer (D/D), ŠKODA Fabia R5	+ 4m 10.9s



ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 3 of 5

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 Corsica	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 Spain

Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) defended their lead in the WRC 2 class on Saturday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





ŠKODA Motorsport, Page 4 of 5



ŠKODA at the Rally Spain

Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) won four special stages on Saturday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Rally Spain

The rally came to a premature end on Saturday for Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN).

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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.



ŠKODA Motorsport

, Page 5 of 5

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.