



ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 1 of 5

Thrilling sizzling battle in Poland: Lappi takes the lead in the ŠKODA duel

- › ŠKODA works duo Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm head into the final day of the Rally Poland with a 10.8 second lead over colleagues Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula
- › Five ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the top eight at one of the fastest events in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › 59.60 kilometres left to go at the full throttle show
- › Last year's winner Lappi: "It's not over yet: Suninen is very fast"
- ›

Mikolajki, 2 July 2016 – Last year's winner Esapekka Lappi kept a cool head at the sizzling battle in Poland and took the leading position in the WRC 2 in the ŠKODA duel. However, the "Flying Finns" Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm head into the final day of the Rally Poland with a minimal lead of 10.8 seconds over their colleagues Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN). The winner will be decided over the final 59.60 classified kilometres on Sunday at the full throttle event on the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) calendar.

"It was a good day for us. We only made one minor error at an intersection. We tried everything and it paid off. But it's not over yet: Suninen is very fast. Sunday will be really difficult," said Lappi. The blond was commanding as he celebrated the historic first win in the new ŠKODA FABIA R5 at the Rally Poland last year. In glorious sunshine and with temperatures over 30 degrees, it is a lot closer this weekend.

ŠKODA works driver Lappi started the race on Saturday trailing Suninen by 4.6 seconds. In a wise tactical move, Lappi held back slightly on the first passes of the special stages "Goldap", "Stanczyki" and "Babki". The current WRC 2 championship leader Elfyn Evans (GB/Ford), who in third place had, at one point, closed to within 14.8 seconds of the leaders, consistently set the best times.

But then in the afternoon Lappi completed the second pass of the three stages at full throttle in his ŠKODA FABIA R5. With a magnificent best time on the 14th special stage overall, "Stanczyki 2", the 25-year-old took the lead for the first time in the ŠKODA duel with his fellow countryman Suninen and, with another two best times, extended his lead to a total of 10.8 seconds. Evans is lurking in third place with a deficit of 26.6 seconds and should not be written off yet going into the final four special stages on Sunday. "It was a magnificent battle at the highest level throughout the day. Sunday will be difficult, but we will try our best to win," promised the ŠKODA FABIA R5 driver Suninen.

The second ŠKODA works team Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S), who were in the lead until the penultimate stage on Friday when a problem ended their day, returned to the rally on Saturday. With strong times the duo worked their way back up into 13th



ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 2 of 5

place in the overall standings. "We are no longer able to get involved in the gripping ŠKODA duel for the win. Which is why we are using the rest of the rally to gain experience for the upcoming Rally Finland," said Tidemand.

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 proved to be the "full throttle champion" of the WRC 2 again on Saturday. In the overall standings, five of the Czech rally racers are in the top eight. In addition to front-runner Lappi and second-placed Suninen, Nicolás Fuchs (PE/fifth), Armin Kremer (D/seventh) and Scott Pedder (AUS/eighth) are also on their way to a strong result.

Interim standings - Rally Poland (WRC 2):

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	2:09:36.3 hrs.
2. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 0:10.8 min.
3. Evans/Parry (GB/GB)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 0:26.6 min.
4. Gilbert/Jamoul (F/F)	Citroën DS3 R5	+ 4:30.6 min.
5. Fuchs/Mussano (PE/RA)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 5:04.5 min.

The number of the day for the Rally Poland: 121.48

ŠKODA works driver Esapekka Lappi achieved the fastest average speed in the WRC 2 on the second pass of the special stage "Babki" on Saturday. The 25-year-old took just 10:22.9 minutes to complete the 21.02-kilometre stage. That is an average speed of 121.48 kilometres per hour – a strong performance on the dusty gravel tracks in the lakes region of Masuria. The Rally Poland, along with the following Rally Finland, is the fastest stop on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar.



ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 3 of 5

FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	21.01.-24.01.2016
Rally Sweden	11.02.-14.02.2016
Rally Mexico	03.03.-06.03.2016
Rally Argentina	21.04.-24.04.2016
Rally Portugal	19.05.-22.05.2016
Rally Italy	09.06.-12.06.2016
Rally Poland	30.06.-03.07.2016
Rally Finland	28.07.-31.07.2016
Rally Germany	18.08.-21.08.2016
Rally China	08.09.-11.09.2016
Rally Corsica	29.09.-02.10.2016
Rally Spain	13.10.-16.10.2016
Rally Great Britain	27.10.-30.10.2016
Rally Australia	17.11.-20.11.2016

For more information:

David Haidinger, Communications Motorsport

Ph. +420 604 292 188

david.haidinger@skoda-auto.cz

<http://skoda-motorsport.com>

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ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 4 of 5

Media images:



ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Poland

The flying Finns Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm staged another thrilling duel for first place with their fellow ŠKODA drivers Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN) on Saturday.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Poland

The second ŠKODA works duo Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) made up some places with strong times in the ŠKODA FABIA R5 as they returned to the rally.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview:

ŠKODA has been on the motorsport scene since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include numerous title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Monte Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2015, ŠKODA celebrated four victories in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with their new ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally car. The high-tech 4x4 was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. In the ŠKODA FABIA R5's very first season, factory duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) secured the fourth APRC title in a row for ŠKODA. In addition, the brand claimed five national titles with their new winning model.

ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 proudly continues the brand's long tradition in motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA Super 2000, was the most successful model in ŠKODA's 115-year motorsport history. With the 4x4 from Mladá Boleslav, factory duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the historic feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the drivers' title in the ERC and the APRC in consecutive years. Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 drivers won a total of 50 national and international titles around the world.

In 2016, the factory teams Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (F/F) are competing with the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).



ŠKODA Motorsport Press Release, Page 5 of 5

ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI and SUPERB.
- > in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- > 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 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.