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Victory at festival of speed in Finland: Lappi/Ferm extend winning sequence for ŠKODA

- › Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm repeat last year's victorious performance at their home rally in Finland
- › Sixth consecutive ŠKODA win in the WRC 2
- › Two ŠKODA FABIA R5s in first two places
- › Michal Hrabánek: "A perfect performance from the entire team"

Jyväskylä, 31 July 2016 – Great success for ŠKODA at the Rally Finland. ŠKODA drivers dominated proceedings in the WRC 2 class at the festival of speed in the forests of central Finland, the fastest rally on the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) calendar. The "flying Finns" Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm repeated last year's victory in the FABIA R5. In second place: their ŠKODA brand team-mates Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula (FIN/FIN), who competed in a FABIA R5 from the ŠKODA customer sport programme. The second ŠKODA Motorsport duo of Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) retired from the rally during the final special stage after impressive efforts to catch up.

"At the Rally Finland, we saw a perfect performance from the entire ŠKODA team once again," said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek. "I am particularly pleased for Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm, who were on a different level in their home rally and more than deserved their first win of the season. Of course I sympathise with Pontus and Jonas, who gave their all trying to chase second place and were punished harshly just before the end. However: two ŠKODA FABIA R5s in the first two places, a total of four ŠKODA teams in the Top 10, and ŠKODA drivers won 20 of 23 special stages. The FABIA R5 has really made its mark on the Rally Finland."

Lappi laid the foundations for victory on Thursday and Friday. The 25-year-old Finn won the first seven special stages to put some distance between himself and the chasing pack early on. Lappi cemented his lead with five stage best times during the remainder of the rally, including a win on the legendary "Ouninpohja" stage at full speed over countless crests. "I am absolutely delighted," said Lappi. "It was a perfect weekend for us. It is something special to be able to celebrate our first win of the season at our home rally, especially as we led from start to finish. The FABIA R5 performed perfectly. On these wonderful stages, it was great fun to drive such a well-balanced car on the limit. I feel really sorry for Pontus and Jonas. They pushed and pushed on Sunday to try and claim the one-two for ŠKODA Motorsport. Sadly, they were not rewarded for the risks they took."



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In many respects, team-mate Tidemand was the man of the day at the Rally Finland. The 25-year-old Swedish driver started the final day 11.1 seconds behind second-placed Suninen. Tidemand recorded the best time in the first three special stages on Sunday morning to reduce the gap to 3.8 seconds. However, an accident on the last stage of the rally brought the chase to an abrupt end. "Before the last stage, we said that we would try everything in our power to catch Teemu," said Tidemand. "But when you take such big risks, there is always a chance that it can go wrong – especially on the fast gravel stages in Finland. I am sorry for the team, who provided us with a perfect car once again this weekend. I was really hoping to claim the one-two result for ŠKODA Motorsport."

Suninen was the one to profit from Tidemand's misfortune, finishing safely in second place and reducing the gap to world championship leader Elfyn Evans (GB, Ford, 95 points) to two points in the WRC 2 overall standings. Lappi's win moved him up to fourth place (57 points) in the world championship standings. Two more ŠKODA customer teams completed the great set of results. Hubert Ptaszek/Maciek Szczepaniak (PL/PL) and Scott Pedder/Dale Moscatt (AUS/AUS) also finished in the Top 10 of the WRC 2 standings in Finland, in seventh and eighth position respectively.

The next world championship rally is scheduled to take place in less than three weeks. The hunt for world championship points will take place in the vineyards around Trier when the Rally Germany takes place from 18th to 21th August.

Rally Finland result (WRC 2):

1. Lappi/Ferm (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	2h 42m 59,6s
2. Suninen/Markkula (FIN/FIN)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 41.7s
3. Evans/Parry (GB/GB)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 2m 1.8s
4. Solberg/Minor (N/A)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 5m 58.1s
5. Gilbert/Jamoul (F/F)	Citroën DS3 R5	+ 6m 0.6s
6. Aasen/Engan (N/N)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 7m 4.3s
7. Ptaszek/Szczepaniak (PL/PL)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 7m 23.5s
8. Pedder/Moscatt (AUS/AUS)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 7m 33.5s
9. Bonato/Giraudet (F/F)	Citroën DS3 R5	+ 7m 48.4s
10. Shymiev/Tsvetkov (RUS/RUS)	Ford Fiesta R5	+ 14m 42.3s



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The number of the rally: 86.9

The ŠKODA FABIA R5 was clearly the fastest car in the WRC 2 class at the Rally Finland. At the fastest rally of the year, ŠKODA drivers triumphed in 86.9 percent of the special stages (20 out of 23). This was impressive proof of the level of performance that the high-tech four-wheel-drive car from Mladá Boleslav provides. The winning duo of Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm claimed 12 special stage best times. Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson won five stages in the second FABIA R5 from ŠKODA Motorsport. Teemu Suninen/Mikko Markkula, who were competing in a FABIA R5 from the ŠKODA Motorsport customer sport programme, were fastest on three special stages.

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ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Finland

The "flying Finns" Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm celebrated a start-finish victory in the FABIA R5.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO





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ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in Finland

Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson retired just before the finish after an impressive chase on Sunday.

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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 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.