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46th Barum Rally Zlín: ŠKODA looking forward to rally classic on home soil

- › **46th Barum Rally Zlín: ŠKODA Motorsport faces double challenge of the European Rally Championship (ERC) and the Czech Rally Championship (MČR)**
- › **Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler start in the FABIA R5 with a special red/black livery and could win their fifth MČR rally in a row this season**
- › **German duo Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian start with support from ŠKODA Motorsport**

Mladá Boleslav, 23 August 2016 – Jan Kopecký (CZ) and co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZ) have their sights set on winning the traditional rally in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) for the fifth time. After four wins at the first four rounds of the season, the Czech ŠKODA duo is the top favourite to triumph at the 46th Barum Czech Rally Zlín. However, the international opposition is strong at the asphalt event in Moravia – the Barum Rally also forms part of the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) this year.

“The Barum Czech Rally Zlín is undoubtedly a classic on the rally calendar and excites rally drivers and fans alike. We have the chance here to defend the title we won last year with the ŠKODA FABIA R5. With four wins from four rallies this year, Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler have shown emphatically that the FABIA R5 is a winning car – and in a wide range of different conditions. The fact that we are up against international opposition at the Rally Zlín makes the event all the more attractive.” said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek.

This year’s Barum Czech Rally Zlín consists of 229.94 kilometres against the clock, spread over 15 special stages. The first highlight for the drivers and fans comes as early as Friday evening, when the streets of the 700-year-old industrial city of Zlín host the spectator stage of the same name. Thousands of fans are expected to enjoy the rally action up close and personal – and this year they are in for a special treat: the FABIA R5 of Kopecký/Dresler will feature a special red/black livery for the first time.

“I am really looking forward to the Rally Zlín, as it is one of the true classics when it comes to European asphalt rallies. We have had a fantastic season so far, and it would be phenomenal to claim our fifth win in a row this season at the Barum Rally,” said Jan Kopecký, who finished second in the WRC 2 class at last week’s Rally Germany in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). “The FABIA R5 has been fast and reliable all year. I see no reason why we should not be strong again in Zlín. I would like to repeat last year’s win. Furthermore, Pavel and I obviously want to put on a good show for the fans.” Should Kopecký win, it would be the 34-year-old’s fifth victory at the Barum Rally.



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A total of eleven ŠKODA FABIA R5s will start at the rally around Zlín, including the high-tech powerhouse of Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian (D/D), who currently lead the German Rally Championship (DRM). The German duo will line up at the Barum Rally with support from ŠKODA Motorsport. Kreim has already made one guest appearance in this season's MČR at the recent Rally Bohemia. This month has already seen him in action in both the World Rally Championship (WRC 2) event in Germany and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), in which Kreim is currently second overall.

"I cannot wait for my outing at the Rally Zlín. The Czech fans are incredibly passionate and it is great to be back driving in the Czech Republic after the race in Bohemia," said Kreim. The youngster was on course for a podium finish for long stretches of the Rally Bohemia in July. However, a puncture ultimately meant he had to settle for seventh place. "I want to build on that good performance and to continue to improve in Zlín."

As well as witnessing international rally stars in action, there is also plenty on offer for fans in the ŠKODA Park. As usual in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), a competition will offer the chance to win a ŠKODA OCTAVIA RS 230 for a year.

Czech Rally Championship (MČR)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Šumava Klatovy	29.04.-30.04.2016
Rally Český Krumlov	27.05.-28.05.2016
Rally Hustopeče	17.06.-18.06.2016
Rally Bohemia	02.07.-03.07.2016
Barum Czech Rally Zlín	26.08.-28.08.2016
Rally Příbram	30.09.-01.10.2016

Did you know ...

... the production version of the ŠKODA FABIA is also available in red/black? The ŠKODA FABIA Monte Carlo and FABIA Combi Monte Carlo feature such elements as the large, black panoramic glass roof, black radiator grille, black alloys and black wing mirrors. The sporty Monte Carlo models are a homage to all those who have been involved in and shown such commitment to the Czech manufacturer's success on the rally scene.

... the opening stage of the Barum Czech Rally traditionally leads the cars through the streets around the 700-year-old city of Zlín? It starts at 21:00 on Friday evening and consists of three laps of 3.1 kilometres, bringing the total distance of the spectacular spectator stage to 9.3 kilometres. The competitors must also complete two laps on the second stage – Březová – on Saturday morning.



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... the iconic rally has been won by the same car for five years in a row twice in its illustrious history? It goes without saying that it was a ŠKODA on both occasions. Between 1976 and 1980, the winners were all at the wheel of a ŠKODA 130 RS. Meanwhile, the ŠKODA Fabia Super 2000 was the winning car between 2009 and 2013. Last year, Jan Kopecký won in its successor – the FABIA R5.

... the weather can play a key role at the Barum Rally? The fast asphalt routes, some of which lead through the thick forests around Zlín, can soon become very slippery should it rain. As such, the drivers must be fully-focussed at all times.

... the Barum Czech Rally Zlín first featured in the Czechoslovakian Rally Championship in 1972? It also formed part of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) for many years and was in contention for a place on the calendar of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in 2005. Since merging with the IRC, the rally has formed part of the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), as it did in 2013.

... the rally takes its name from a Czech tyre maker? The company is based in Otrokovice and is a subsidiary of shoe manufacturer Bata, which was founded in Zlín in 1894.

... several hundred journalists report on the Barum Czech Rally every year? In 2015, 294 media representatives from 20 countries reported from the classic rally in the Czech Republic.

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Media images:



ŠKODA at the Barum Czech Rally Zlín

Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler start in the FABIA R5 with the special red/black livery for the first time.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Barum Czech Rally Zlín

Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler start in the FABIA R5 with the special red/black livery for the first time.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the Barum Czech Rally Zlín

Fabian Kreim and Frank Christian (D/D) are making their second guest start in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR) at the Barum Czech Rally Zlín. They recently finished seventh at the Rally Bohemia.

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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 Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) and the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), 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.



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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 Tidem and/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 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, Rapid, Octavia, Yeti and Superb.
- › delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide in 2015.
- › 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 such as engines and gear transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic. It also produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India, mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs about 25,900 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.