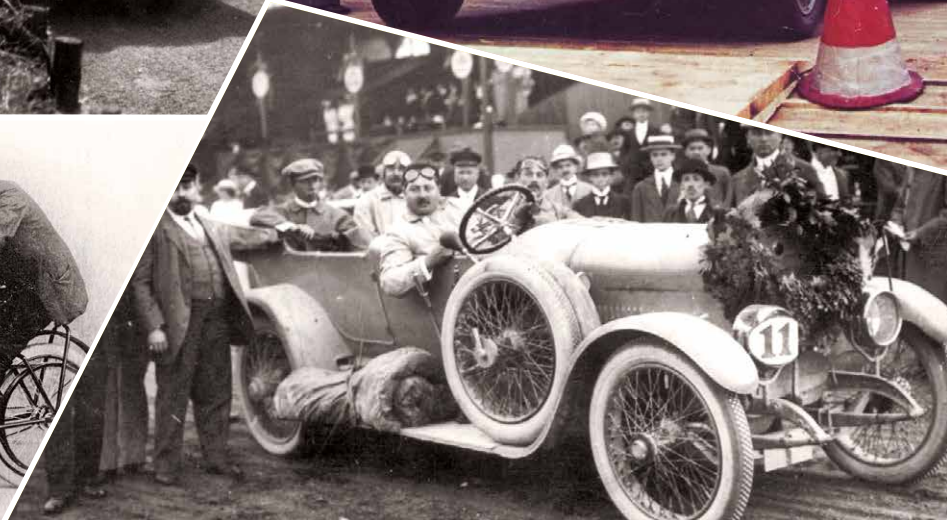




120 YEARS ON THE RACETRACK

ŠKODA Motorsport
history





Dear readers,

Cars and passion go hand-in-hand. From the first sketches, models and prototypes to the final product, ŠKODA AUTO manufactures cars that inspire passion and enthusiasm in customers around the world. These emotions come to the fore on racetracks and circuits; whether you are a spectator or a racer, you belong to a family of enthusiasts. Vehicles built in Mladá Boleslav have been generating enthusiasm for motorsport for 120 years – since 1901 when the company made its successful racing debut on a Laurin & Klement motorcycle: The legendary Narcis Podsedníček, factory head foreman, set out on a 1,196 km endurance race from Paris to Berlin. He reached the finish late at night as the first driver in his category. Unfortunately, he couldn't find any race directors. Therefore, he at least asked a local police officer to confirm his official time of arrival. The first victory was not official, but rather moral and it started a series of spectacular triumphs. Only few people could have imagined that race vehicles from Mladá Boleslav would continue to appear on racetracks for many years to come.

The brand's 120-year motorsport history has been written by remarkable people who tamed wonderful machines whose power and beauty continue to inspire. Narcis Podsedníček always tried to stay one step ahead of the game, and with the same passion, the carmaker is still active in the motorsport scene today. This publication will briefly introduce you to some of the racing highlights that will forever be associated with the brand.

Michal Hrabánek,

Head of the ŠKODA Motorsport Team

Václav Klement (standing in the middle) later admitted that he considered the victory to be his greatest business triumph. Dourdan, 1905.



FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS

In late 1895, Václav Laurin and Václav Klement began repairing and building bicycles.

Only they knew what they wanted to achieve in the provincial town of Mladá Boleslav. Well... did they? Perhaps. Did they have enough confidence? Certainly. They started with a 2 hp steam engine whirring away in a rented workshop. Three years later they built a factory; the very next year, they launched their first motorcycle, and then their first car (1905). L&K soon became the largest car manufacturer in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Václav Laurin (1865–1930)



He came from Kamení u Trnova. He was trained as a machine fitter, worked at several workshops and bicycle production factories and also spent some time in Dresden. In 1894, he had a chance meeting with the younger Václav Klement; Laurin oversaw production and engineering at the company, and the Laurin-Klement partnership lasted until they were separated by death.

Václav Klement (1868–1938)

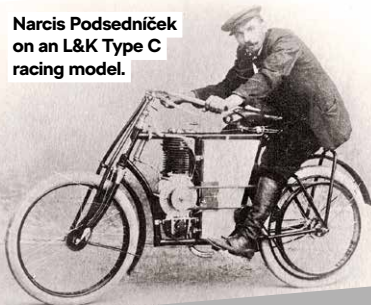


Born in Velvary. He was trained as a book-seller and settled in Mladá Boleslav. In today's terms, he was a born manager. Having identified the potential of motorcycles and cars, he turned the business into a joint-stock company (1907). He later decided that only by selling the company to the ŠKODA Group (1925) would the car factory's future be secured. Under his last will and testament, his possessions were given to charity organisations.

No racing!

The final years of the 19th century saw many bicycle manufacturers participate in prestigious cycling races; racing success was a powerful advertising medium. However, the Mladá Boleslav-based brand opted out. Instead, L&K warned customers that by buying foreign bicycles, they were paying for "irrelevant racing-oriented advertising run by most bicycle factories".

**Narcis Podsedníček
on an L&K Type C
racing model.**



Trophy collectors

The appetite comes with eating. On 11 May 1902, Václav Laurin and Narcis Podsedníček took the first two places at Neuwaldegg – Exelberg, an uphill race. Another race was held in June, between Paris and Vienna: four days, 1,750 km, 138 racers, of which 14 were on motorcycles. Only two motorcyclists made it to the Vienna finish line, Čeněk Rieger and Narcis Podsedníček on L&Ks, coming 3rd and 4th, respectively.

Two events in Dourdan

In 1904, the Austrian Motorcyclists Association invited L&K to the first run of the International Motorcycle Cup in Dourdan, France. L&K sent three people to Paris: Václav Klement, Václav Vondřich and František Toman. The event was a catastrophe, not least because someone threw a barrage of nails on the track, and only three Frenchmen and two Czechs finished the race. The Germans, English and Danish racers dropped out. The same 250 km race was held again the following year, in 1905, and Vondřich did not leave anything to chance; after taking the lead in the second lap, he broke away from his rivals to eventually win the race.

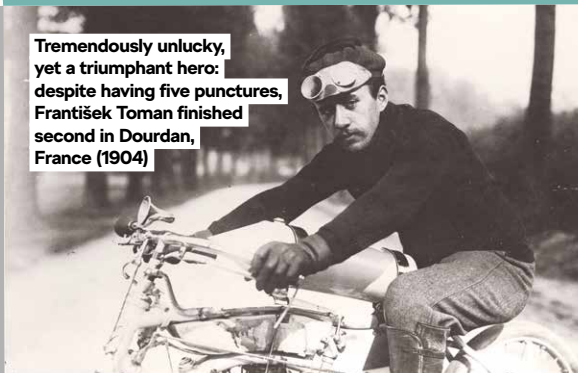
Let's go racing!

The first L&K motorcycle premiered on 18 November 1899, and the first race the factory appeared in was in June 1901 between Paris and Berlin (1,196 km). Narcis Podsedníček crossed the finish line at 3 a.m., but there was no one from the organising team waiting for him this early in the morning. Although Narcis had his arrival time confirmed by a policeman, the jury did not accept that as sufficient proof. Yet, later that morning, the event participants that knew the truth took the unofficial winner on their shoulders and carried him out of the hotel. The Mladá Boleslav team entered the world of motorsport on the right foot!

Narcis Podsedníček (1866–1932)

Mr. Podsedníček was born in Moravia. He was unemployed when, one day in Prague, he met Klement, a man whose bicycles he had previously sold for some time. He was in luck – he moved to Mladá Boleslav in early 1900 to start work as a foreman in motorcycle production while also becoming the first factory-backed racer. Except for short periods at Puch and as a chauffeur at Prince Erich von Thurn and Taxis, Podsedníček stayed at L&K until he retired in 1925.

**Tremendously unlucky,
yet a triumphant hero:
despite having five punctures,
František Toman finished
second in Dourdan,
France (1904)**



Václav Vondřich (1874–1943)

One of the first famous racers was born in Prague. He bought a motorcycle in 1900 and started his racing career in 1902. He teamed up with Klement and rode for the L&K brand as a freelance rider. Later, he became an employee, working as a manager of a Prague car dealership until his retirement.



**Václav Vondřich with
a satchel on his back
(1905) – on a motorcycle
without a gearbox; front
brake, with a belt-driven
rear wheel.**

BIG NAMES

In 1905, the company ceased bicycle production, stopped developing new motorcycle models, and turned its attention to automobiles. By presenting its first two-cylinder car, the Voiturette A, in Vienna in October and Prague in December 1905, L&K opened a new chapter in the world of engines.



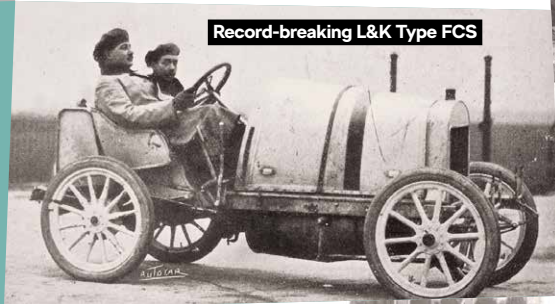
Telegram for Václav Klement from the 8th run of the Semmering Uphill Motorcycle Race (1906): "Came first, 25 sec ahead of the runner-up, best time across all categories, Kolowrat."

Count Kolowrat

Count Alexander Kolowrat-Krakowsky made the brand famous all over Europe and formed a one-of-a-kind duo with Otto Hieronimus. The first run of the Zbraslav – Jíloviště (near Prague) in 1908 saw L&K win six first places, five second places and one third. At St. Petersburg – Moscow, Hieronimus won the class with his 16 hp FC model, beating competitors with cars up to 100 hp.

New record

The most successful model was the FCS with engines of up to 96 hp. To enhance the brand's image, Klement sent one FCS to the Brooklands track in September 1908. Hieronimus reached a speed of 118.72 kph, setting a new record in the class of cars with a four-cylinder engine and a bore of up to 86 mm.



Record-breaking L&K Type FCS

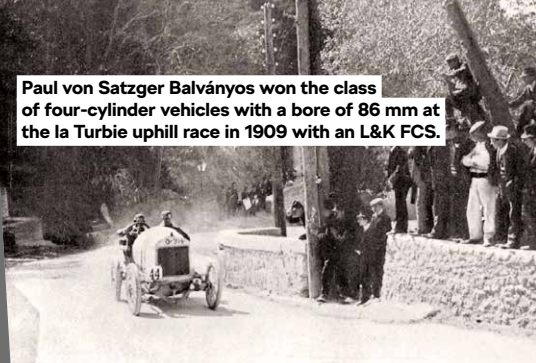


L&K Type FCs in front of the Kremlin during the St. Petersburg – Moscow (1908): Driver Bukshin from Russia (left) about whose result we have no information, Otto Hieronimus (right).

FCR race car

Encouraged by his previous achievements, Hieronimus designed and built the FCR special. This four-cylinder OHC vehicle featured an 85 mm bore, a huge stroke of 250 mm and 100 hp produced by a 5.672 cm³ engine. The FCR was one hell of a machine on wire wheels with tyres like those on modern mountain bikes. The view out of the vehicle's coffin-width body was like peering out of a submarine. The very first appearance in Semmering (1909) resulted in victory.

Paul von Satzger Balványos won the class of four-cylinder vehicles with a bore of 86 mm at the la Turbie uphill race in 1909 with an L&K FCS.



FCR, Gaillon uphill race on 1 October 1911. Dr Alexander Comanos Pasha won the four-cylinder category with a bore of up to 85 mm.



Otto Hieronimus (1879–1922)

He was born in Cologne. At the age of sixteen, he joined Benz, and from the age of twenty, he worked for Spitz. He also took part in the disastrous Paris-Madrid venture of 1903. He made the L&K brand famous in factories all over Europe. He left in May 1911 but remained in friendly contact with the company until he was killed in an accident during an uphill practice session in Ries.

To Russia and to the Alps

From 1910 onwards, the factory focused on reliability and endurance trips such as the Prince Thurn-Taxis Erich ride. In 1909, the Prince launched the Industrial Award, with prize money of 10,000 crowns to be won by the car manufacturer who won the most trophies in selected motorsport events over 1909, 1910 and 1911. The award went to Mladá Boleslav. The highlight was L&K's appearance at St. Petersburg – Sevastopol (Russia), a 2,400 km event that took place from 20 to 29 September 1911. A total of 57 cars of major brands from England,

France, Germany, Italy, the USA and Austria headed to the start line. At the finish, five L&Ks celebrated victory after covering the entire route without penalty points. Count Kolowrat won the Hungarian Auto-Club Carpathian Race in May 1914 (2,500 km) and then successfully finished the Alpine Ride, again with zero penalty points.



Count Alexander Kolowrat-Krakowsky (1886–1927)

A modern nobleman – educated, ambitious, yet modest. Despite being a beginner, he rode 15,000 km on an L&K motorcycle within six months in 1904! He spent his most memorable years with L&K, often returning to Mladá Boleslav after the war when he lived in Vienna.



We've made it! The Mladá Boleslav car manufacturer wins the Thurn-Taxis Award.

BETWEEN THE WARS

After Gavrilo Princip had shot dead the heir to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand d'Este, on 28 June 1914, car manufacturers started looking for forms of competition other than times achieved on racetracks.

On the start line again

A decimated Europe was slow to recover from the ravages of war. The first race in the newly founded Czechoslovakia took place in September 1920 on a 129.6 km circuit. Of the 12 participants, Pavel Münzer won on a 4.7-litre L&K type Mf. The Zbraslav – Jíloviště uphill race in 1922 with 95 racers on the start line was more attractive. The under-2.8 l class was won by Bertrand in an L&K (3:59.05). Breuer beat all rivals in this car in the Schöber uphill race in 1922, including in the five-litre category. Held for the first time in 1922, Ecce Homo became a famous event and still exists today. Driving an L&K race car on a 7.75 km track, Bertrand beat all his rivals with a time of 6:53.3, including Mittermüller in a Tatra whose engine was twice as big.



Zbraslav at the start. Driver Svoboda in an L&K RK/M 5.3 l wins the trophy for the fastest series-production car (1922). Today, the RK/M OHV can be seen at the National Technical Museum.

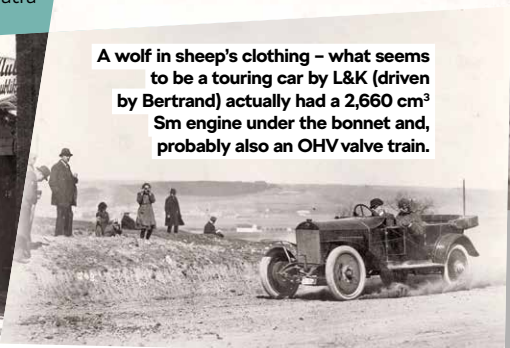
1,000 Miles

In the mid-1920s, the Mladá Boleslav car manufacturer stopped appearing at motorsport events for some time. The company's overall situation resulted in a merger with ŠKODA, a Pilsen-based engineering group, in 1925. To support the domestic automotive industry, the Autoklub held 1,000 Miles of Czechoslovakia for three consecutive years, the first of which was in June 1933. Drivers had to complete the Prague-Bratislava-Prague route twice. ŠKODA entered the race with three 637s (six-cylinder vehicles) that came 2nd, 3rd and 4th in the under-two-litre class. In 1934 the brand finished second in the under-2,000 cm³ category. In the third (final) run in 1935, Antonín Komár / Vladimír Houšť finished 5th.

Motorsport success was no longer considered commercially viable. The fatal shots were fired in Sarajevo five days later.



Zbraslav-Jíloviště uphill race of 1921. An L&K driven by Kern from Jihlava wins the under-5 l class.



A wolf in sheep's clothing – what seems to be a touring car by L&K (driven by Bertrand) actually had a 2,660 cm³ 5m engine under the bonnet and, probably also an OHV valve train.

ŠKODA RAPID SIX for 1,000 Miles of Czechoslovakia (1935). This car was based on the 637 with a central frame and a six-cylinder 1,961 cm³ engine, generating 36.8 kW (50 hp) with a top speed of 130 kph.



POPULAR Sport at the 1936 Monte Carlo Rally. Zdeněk Pohl and Jaroslav Hausman (in the car) finished second in the under-1500 cm³ class and 20th overall. Not bad for an event debut!



**Ready for the 1936 MCR.
Zdeněk Pohl left, Jaroslav Hausman right.**



Monte Carlo

In January 1936, Zdeněk Pohl and Jaroslav Hausman appeared at the Monte Carlo Rally with a two-seater roadster. The ŠKODA POPULAR Sport featured fluid brakes, an additional tank, heating system, heated windscreen and the more powerful 1,386 cm³ engine used in the RAPID. The duo finished 2nd in their class and 20th overall out of 72 teams. This success inspired ŠKODA to produce a limited edition called POPULAR Monte Carlo available in coupé and roadster versions. 1937 saw Pohl and Hausman drive a ŠKODA RAPID coupé from Palermo. Out of 121 crews, 81 made it to the finish line in Monaco. The Czechs finished third in the under-1500 cm³ class, but their rear-view mirror, which was 4 cm² smaller than required under the race rules, knocked them down to 4th. A 2,420 km race through Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia was held in September 1937; the countries grouped in a military alliance known as the Little Entente, and the victory went to Zdeněk Pohl in a Popular. In 1938 in South America, Victor Borrat Fabini won the Mercedes-Monte-video in a one-litre Popular after taking the lead and then breaking away from the rest of the field. By that time, brown clouds had spread over Europe and to other parts of the world, and racing and competitions were out of the question.

Jaroslav "Jája" Hausman (1907-1976)

He worked as a versatile designer at the company J. Kameníček a spol. He was engaged in sports motoring and flying. After World War I, he became editor-in-chief of Svět Motorů magazine and one of the first vintage car experts in Czechoslovakia. He wrote several books and manuals on motoring.

Zdeněk Pohl (1906-1986)

A prominent racer, who won the 1st run of the Golden Helmet speedway race (1929). He was a friend of Jiří Lobkowitz with whom he formed a Bugatti car racing team. He won many races home and abroad and retired from racing after a serious accident on the Vršovice Circuit in Prague (1947).

Jaroslav Hausman and Zdeněk Pohl chose the ŠKODA RAPID (coupé) for their next Monte Carlo Rally in 1937.



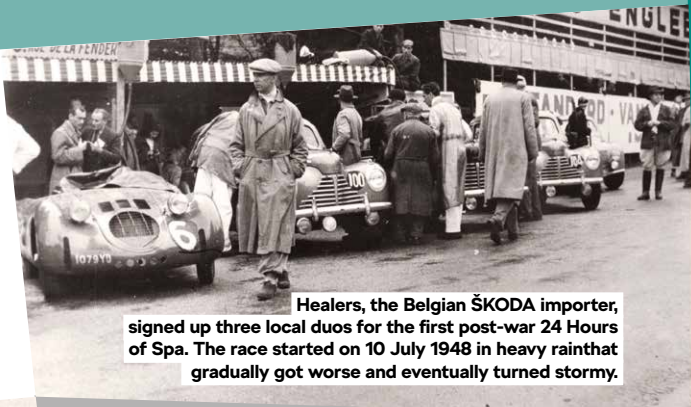
SLOW START

The post-war times turned society upside down – the nationalisation of Czechoslovakia's industry in October 1945 was followed by a communist coup in 1948.

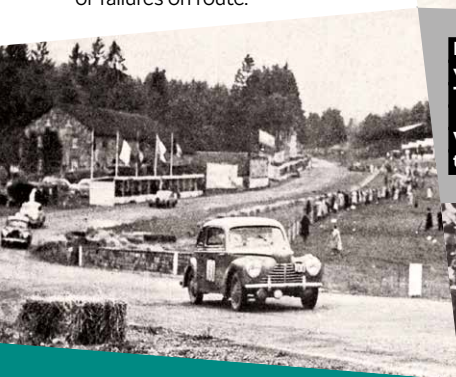
However, motorsport was seemingly unaffected. The first race, Prague Grand Prix in June 1946, featured pre-war BMWs and Bugattis; ŠKODA had no race car at that time.

No breakdowns in Spa

At the first post-war 24 Hours of Spa, three local crews completed the race with ŠKODA 1101s in close pursuit, crossing the finish line together. They covered 1972 km at an average speed of 82.16 km/h. Out of 42 crews in total, only 23 finished the race, and ŠKODA was the only team to have experienced no defects or failures on route.



Healers, the Belgian ŠKODA importer, signed up three local duos for the first post-war 24 Hours of Spa. The race started on 10 July 1948 in heavy rain that gradually got worse and eventually turned stormy.



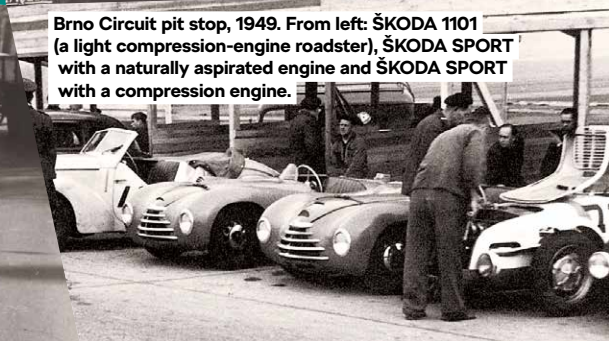
In Uruguay, Artur Porro (right) won Montevideo-Melo-Monte video 1948 (1,000 km) and received the President's Trophy. The runner-up was Borrat Fabini (left, representing the brand) who had earned a reputation as an excellent driver before World War II. The drivers are both humorously pointing out the fact that Porro finished without a windscreen.



According to the team's tactics, all the cars at Spa should follow each other closely, refuel together, and cross the finish line together, which they did.



Waldner and Sint Nicolaas (Netherlands), ŠKODA 1102, Tulpen Rally 1951.



Brno Circuit pit stop, 1949. From left: ŠKODA 1101 (a light compression-engine roadster), ŠKODA SPORT with a naturally aspirated engine and ŠKODA SPORT with a compression engine.

First race cars

Nine Czechoslovak duos appeared at the Monte Carlo Rally in 1949. Karel Mrázek and co-pilot Kohlík in a ŠKODA 1101 finished 10th in their class comprising 19 cars and 84th overall out of 166 cars. The Mladá Boleslav plant built two ŠKODA Sport race cars, both featuring a two-seater aluminium pontoon body and a four-cylinder OHV engine. In one of the vehicles, the engine was supercharged by a Roots compressor. In September 1949, Jaroslav Netušil won his class with an average speed of 97 kph on the Masaryk Circuit in the weaker of the two cars, and Václav Bobek sr. with the compression engine finished second in the under 1.5 l class, averaging 105 kph.

In 1950, the brand went to France with a ŠKODA SPORT to take part in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. By the halfway point of the race, Netušil and Bobek sr. were fighting for the lead in their class, holding 5th place overall, but 13 hours in, a piston pin fuse came loose, damaging the cylinder and the race was over for them. That same year, two ŠKODA SUPERSPORT 1.1 l race cars were built, featuring cigar bodywork and exposed wheels. One of them benefitted from a Roots compressor. In Brno the weaker of the two SUPERSPORTs won its class while the supercharged one came third in the under 1.5 l category. October 1953 saw the Records Day in Prague (Barrandov), where ŠKODA introduced the SUPERSPORT 1500 with two compressors, and Bobek achieved a speed of 197.85 kph.

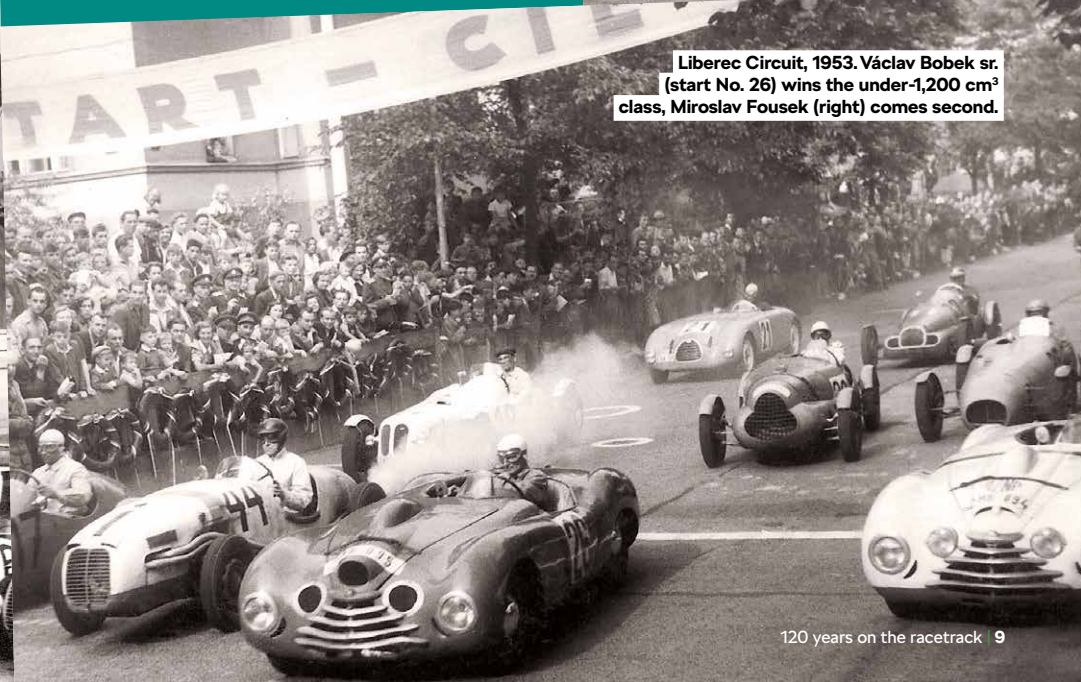


ŠKODA SPORT for Le Mans with Václav Bobek sr. behind the wheel. Mladá Boleslav Castle in the background. The car's 1,089 cm³ engine had an output of 31 kW (42 hp) at 5,200 rpm; top speed 140 kph.

ŠKODA SUPERSPORT with Jaroslav Netušil in an under-2,000 cm³ touring car race in Brno (1952), where he finished second.



Liberec Circuit, 1953. Václav Bobek sr. (start No. 26) wins the under-1,200 cm³ class, Miroslav Foušek (right) comes second.



The ŠKODA team at a dealership in Belgium before the start of the 1955 Liège – Rome – Liège Rally. Left: The ŠKODA 440 with navigator Václav Čížkovský and driver Miroslav Fousek finished 10th overall (143 vehicles took part, 56 completed the rally).



READY FOR EUROPEAN COMPETITION

Production of the ŠKODA 440 with an all-metal two-door body was launched in 1955. This eye-catching car sold very well all over Europe, and factory-backed teams made frequent appearances in European competitions. In 1955, the Miroslav Fousek / Václav Čížkovský duo came 10th at the Liège – Rome – Liège Rally (5,100 km, 143 cars) that was part of the Alpine Rally, and three crews finished 4th, 6th and 11th at the Rally Viking in Norway. ŠKODA cars appeared at the Monte Carlo Rally (debut in 1956), Tulpen Rally, Alpine Rally and the Acropolis Rally. The Mobilgas Rally (16,000 km) in Australia saw a local duo win the overseas car category.

The ŠKODA 440 premiered at the Alpine Rally in 1955. Behind the wheel is Miroslav Fousek who came 5th in the under-1,300 cm³ class; Václav Bobek sr. finished third.



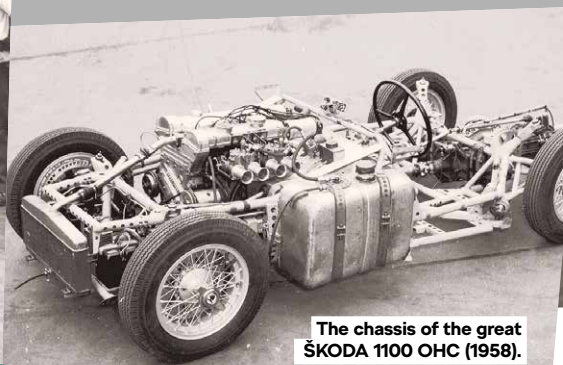
Rally Czechoslovakia 1960, Josef Vidner / Jaromír Vorel in an OCTAVIA. No crash helmet, no safety belts, no roll cage, but... a lovely jacket on a hook.

ŠKODA 1100 OHC

In 1958, the Mladá Boleslav plant built two two-seater race cars: ŠKODA 1100 OHC, and two years later the team added two aluminium coupés on the same chassis. The 1,089 cm³, 66 kW engine was mounted in a tubular frame and the cars reached speeds of 190 km/h. However, these extremely successful cars appeared almost exclusively at local events, except for coming 3rd in Budapest (1958) and winning the Leningrad Grand Prix (1962).



Designed by Jaroslav Kindl, the ŠKODA 1100 OHC bodywork was stunning and would not look out of place among the collections of the most famous Italian designers.



The chassis of the great ŠKODA 1100 OHC (1958).



Pictured here in 1961, the start of the race at Čistá, with two open and two closed ŠKODA 1100 OHC cars at the front.

Tour d'Europe 1963: 15,000 km, 15 days, from Germany to Morocco through northern Africa to Lebanon and back to Germany through Turkey. Would that be possible today? The OCTAVIA No. 26 with Josef Vidner / Bohuslav Staňek won its class and finished 5th overall (57 cars took part; 36 finished).



Václav Bobek sr. and Vojtěch Rieger in a ŠKODA OCTAVIA TS at the Monte Carlo Rally in 1962: the duo finished 97th out of the 247 teams that completed the event. The best ŠKODA duo was Esko Keinänen / Esko Väinölä (FIN) in an OCTAVIA that came 21st overall. The event saw a total of 13 ŠKODAs driven by Czechoslovak, Austrian, Greek, Norwegian and Finnish crews.

WITH A REAR-MOUNTED ENGINE

In March 1964, the **ŠKODA 1000 MB** was introduced with a self-supporting body, a modern aluminium one-litre engine at the rear and rear-wheel drive. The first appearance in the last event of the 1964 season resulted in the first win. ŠKODA dominated the local scene while also doing well abroad. 1966 saw three ŠKODAs appear in the Austrian Alpine Rally (1,664 km), and Václav Bobek jr. / Vojtěch Rieger came sixth overall.

Miroslav Fousek (1923–1993)

A talented, hard-working engineer. He started his professional career at the AZNP Department of Studies, which in the 1950s was an unofficial development unit. He kicked-off his racing career in a ŠKODA 1101 and then demonstrated his skills in rallies, circuit races as well as autocross events. He was involved in and led the development of cars such as the ŠKODA BUGGY, SPIDER I and the famous ŠKODA 200 RS and ŠKODA 130 RS; Alongside Stanislav Cinkel, he built the front-engined, rear-wheel-drive ŠKODA 120 prototypes, then rear-wheel-drive, and finally transaxles. His nickname was 'Nobel'.

Jaroslav Bobek (1927–2007)

Václav's younger brother, started his racing career in ŠKODA 1101s and 440s and ŠKODA 1100 OHCs on circuits, later making a name for himself as a Formula 3 and Formula ŠKODA driver while also recording numerous racing achievements in touring cars such as the ŠKODA 120 S, ŠKODA 130 RS and the SPIDER I and II, in particular.

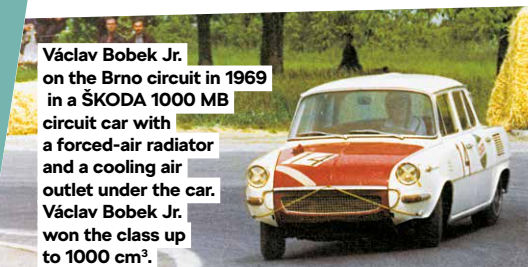
Václav Bobek Sr. (1914–1980)

He was a workshop foreman and a renowned expert, who began his racing career in 1947 and retired in 1971 at the age of 57. He contributed to most of the brand's rally and Formula 3 achievements. He enjoyed the respect of his rivals, becoming one of the biggest names on the Czechoslovak motorsport scene in the 25 years after WWII.



ŠKODA 1100 MB rally car after returning from Rajd Polski (1968), in which Horsák / Motal finished 3rd overall. From left: Jiří Motal, Josef Cech, Oldřich Horsák and Milan Žid.

Václav Bobek Jr. on the Brno circuit in 1969 in a ŠKODA 1000 MB circuit car with a forced-air radiator and a cooling air outlet under the car. Václav Bobek Jr. won the class up to 1000 cm³.



The birthplace of the ŠKODA 120 S rally car (1971–1974). Václav Bobek sr. left, Ladislav Knobloch right. The forced-air radiator proved its worth; the cooling air was discharged upwards through slits in the lid. The 1,172 cm³ engine generated an output of 61.8 kW.

ŠKODA 720

At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, the brand was developing the ŠKODA 720, a car with a front-mounted OHC engine, rear-wheel drive and a Giugiaro body, but all hopes for seeing this beautiful car finished were dashed by the Soviet occupation in August 1968. The only item left was the engine which, thanks to its variable bore and stroke, could range between 1,250 and 2,000 cm³. The engine was subsequently fitted to several sports and race cars but never made it into a series-production model.





Jiří Motal and Oldřich Horsák with Svět Motorů editor Karel Beránek and a ŠKODA 120 S at the Vltava Rally 1972. Only 28 duos completed the event out of 88, and this one came 5th.

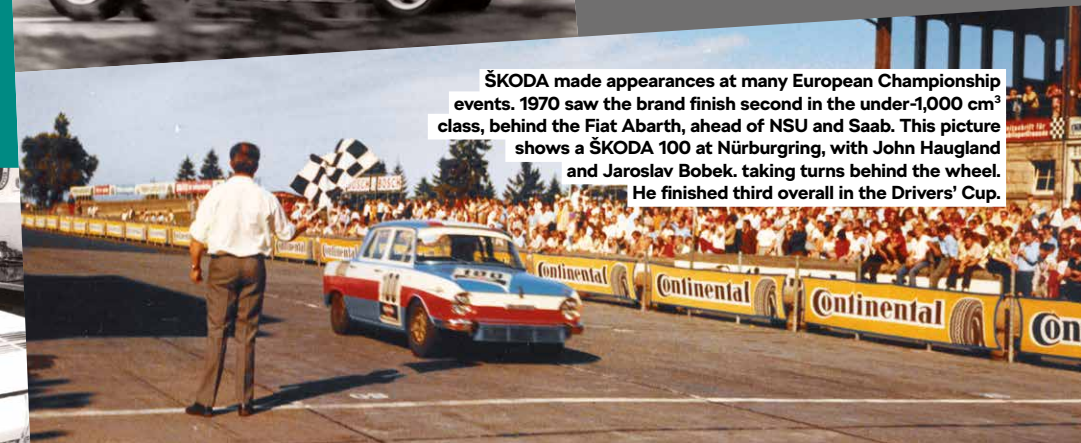
This is not autocross; this is the 1974 RAC Rally! John Haugland and Arild Antonsen in a ŠKODA 120 S: 190 cars on the start line, 83 complete the event, ŠKODA finished 22nd. One year later, John Haugland and Fred Galagher won their class, finishing 15th overall.



There were many nights of lost sleep in the motorsport department over the Š 720 OHC's engine. This picture shows a 1,500 cm³ engine fitted to a ŠKODA 1000 MB driven by Jaroslav Bobek at an event in Havířov (1970). Vibrations at high speeds blew out the rear window.



ŠKODA made appearances at many European Championship events. 1970 saw the brand finish second in the under-1,000 cm³ class, behind the Fiat Abarth, ahead of NSU and Saab. This picture shows a ŠKODA 100 at Nürburgring, with John Haugland and Jaroslav Bobek taking turns behind the wheel. He finished third overall in the Drivers' Cup.



FORMULA 3

In 1964, the brand built an F3 monoposto fitted with a ŠKODA 1000 MB engine and exhibited the car at the Brussels Motor Show. In the 1965–1970 seasons, this model won numerous podium positions in the Czechoslovak championship and the Eastern Bloc Cup which Miroslav Fousek won (overall) in 1968. When the FIA increased the F3 engine volume to 1,600 cm³ from 1971 onwards, the local F3 cars were out of the game. ŠKODA donated one of its F3 cars to the National Technical Museum.



The brand's subsidiary plant in Vrchlabí built an F3 monoposto named LUCIA: a total of three cars were produced. This one was photographed at Hoškovice Airport (1967). The vehicles' one-litre engines had an output of up to 60 kW (90 hp) at 8,600 rpm and reached speeds of up to 200 kph. The suspension system of LUCIA was outside the body.

Fitted with the Š 1000 MB engine, the ŠKODA F3 was introduced in April 1964. Thanks to the knowledge gained from the wind tunnel, the designers placed the springs and shock absorbers in the body, reportedly the world's first solution of its kind in the monoposto category. Four vehicles were produced. Václav Bobek Sr. at the Flora Olomouc Cup in 1969.



ŠKODA BUGGY (1971), an autocross car used by Oldřich Brunclík, another factory team legend. Brunclík used this car throughout the 1971 season and eventually won the under-1,000 cm³ class in the Czechoslovak Championship. In addition to that, Milan Žid won the one-litre class, but the plant abandoned its autocross activities the following season.



Into the mud!

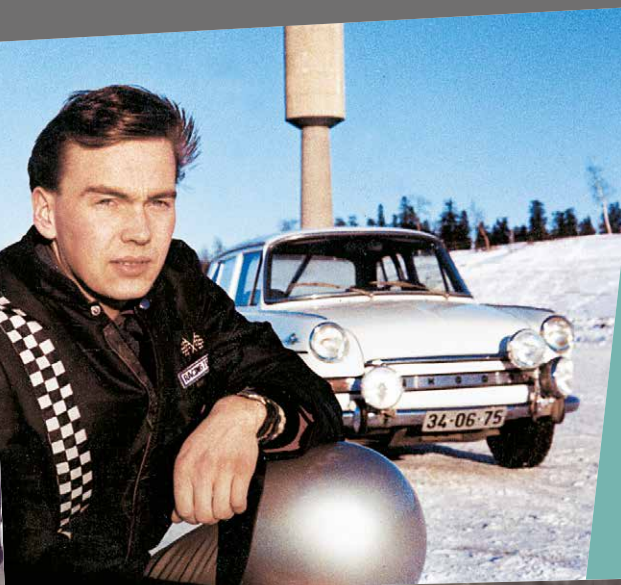
In 1969, Czechoslovakia saw the first local autocross event, and in 1971 a national championship was established. The brand prepared two cars with 1.0 and 1.1 l engines, respectively, and both performed very well throughout the season. Although that was practically the brand's entire presence in this motorsport segment, ŠKODA no doubt stood at the cradle of Czechoslovak autocross. In the following years, several private drivers used the ŠKODA 720 engine in their cars, primarily Jiří Bartoš, the 1990 European Champion.

ŠKODA Formula

In June 1970, Metalex introduced a new national ŠKODA Formula with a 1,100 cm³ engine. ŠKODA was not involved in designing or manufacturing this car, but almost all its mechanical parts came from the series-produced ŠKODA 100. The ŠKODA Formula series played an important role in domestic motorsport, and quite a few of those who started their career in this monoposto later became successful drivers. The first independent ŠKODA Formula race took place in May 1971 in Most, with 14 cars on the start line.



A total of 35 MTX 1-01 formula cars were manufactured by Metalex, a Pilsen-based company, from 1970 to 1987. This picture shows a ŠKODA Formula driven by Jaroslav Bobek, the 1972 National Champion.

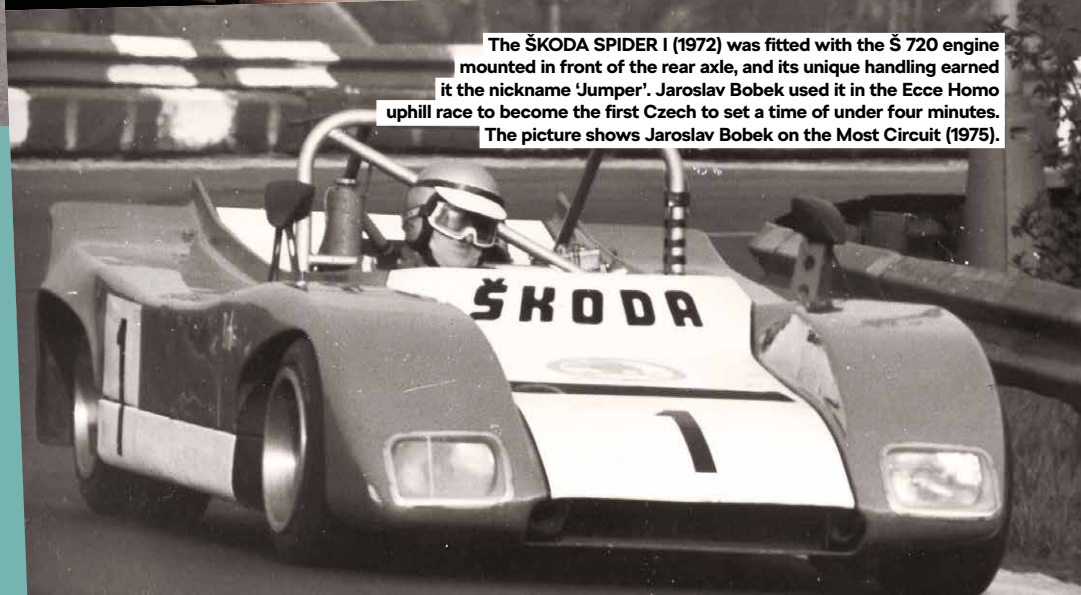


John Haugland (1946)

He began driving at the age of fourteen. When he turned eighteen, he received a driving licence and started to appear in races held on Norway's frozen lakes. Later, he joined the Technical Department of a ŠKODA importer as an apprentice, where he was discovered by service technician Karel Švábek. That moment in 1968 started a long period of fruitful cooperation, and this great partnership lasted until the beginning of the FAVORIT era.

John Haugland drove an OCTAVIA for some time but soon replaced it with a series-produced ŠKODA 1000 MB. He adapted the car slightly to meet the Group I criteria and started appearing in races held on Norway's frozen lakes. His first victory came in his second season in 1967.

The ŠKODA SPIDER I (1972) was fitted with the Š 720 engine mounted in front of the rear axle, and its unique handling earned it the nickname 'Jumper'. Jaroslav Bobek used it in the Ecce Homo uphill race to become the first Czech to set a time of under four minutes. The picture shows Jaroslav Bobek on the Most Circuit (1975).



Sports cars on a motorway access road in Mladá Boleslav; spring 1974. The ŠKODA 120 S rally car; series-production ŠKODA 110 L Rally for novice drivers produced from 1971; ŠKODA SPIDER I and ŠKODA 110 R Coupé adapted for the prototype group B5.



DAWN OF THE RS ERA

After the discontinuation of the ŠKODA 720 project, Mladá Boleslav cars with small-volume rear-mounted engines became the prospect and reality for the next twenty years, and they laid solid foundations for the brand's further motorsport efforts. The more water, snow or ice, the more the drive characteristics of these "all-in-the-rear" ŠKODAs stood out.

In mid-March 1974, the plant built two ŠKODA 200 RS cars and one ŠKODA 180 RS, both coded Š 734. The cars' modified bodies were based on the series-produced ŠKODA 110 R Coupé and were fitted with rear-mounted Š 720 engines with 1,997 cm³ and 1,771 cm³, respectively. The vehicles were officially presented in June of that year. The ŠKODA 200 RS driven by Oldřich Horskák / Jiří Motal.



180+200

As the latest FIA regulations allowed the homologation of only three prototypes, the brand developed a new sports car in the spring of 1975, the ŠKODA 130 RS, first with racing specifications. Derived from the standard ŠKODA 110 R Coupé, the vehicle was a great motorsport contender for the following eight seasons.



The motorsport department, the birthplace of ŠKODA 130 RS rally cars. Note the ŠKODA 1203 (flatbed truck) at the rear right. To be able to transport racing cars, the department extended the series-production flatbed in 1970 by cutting it laterally, extending the chassis and adjusting the connecting shaft. The vehicle is reportedly still in working order today.

Hopes made reality

The 1976 ŠKODA Rally was won by Václav Blahna and Lubislav Hlávka in a brand-new 130 RS with racing specifications. The vehicle more than lived up to the team's expectations. A total of 182 duos from 11 countries started in the event, but only 37 made it as far as the finish line! The ŠKODA 130 RS had an output of 82.5 kW (112 hp) at 7,250 rpm, accelerated from 0 to 100 kph in nine seconds and boasted excellent handling characteristics.

The ŠKODA SPIDER II, type 733 was built in 1975. It's body was tuned in the wind tunnel. The car led Jaroslav Bobek to the title of national champion. That same year, Bobek crossed the finish line in a hill climb race, with another driver backing into his car. Bobek ended up with a broken leg and the car did not survive.



Factory-backed drivers Oldřich Horskák and Jaroslav Bobek took turns behind the wheel of a ŠKODA 130 RS on the Brno Circuit in 1977. The car won its first race of the European Touring Car Championship in the under-1,300 cm³ class.



Oldřich Horskák (1932)

Test driver with a keen eye for technology, began his racing career in Dukla Prague during his military service. In the factory-backed team, he excelled behind the wheel of the ŠKODA 120 S, ŠKODA 200 RS and ŠKODA 130 RS.

Václav Blahna (1948)

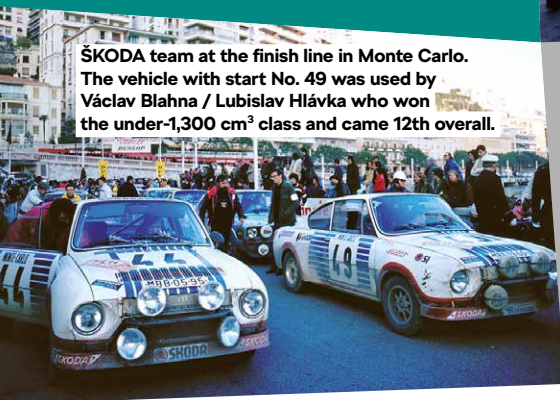
He started appearing in rally events in a 120 S, winning the Peace and Friendship Cup in 1977 and 1980, ŠKODA Rally 1976, Barum Rally 1977, Wallachian Winter Rally 1983. He was crowned National Champion in 1974, 1975, (ŠKODA 120 S), 1976, 1983 and 1987. He won his class and finished 12th overall at the Monte Carlo Rally 1977, came eighth overall at the Acropolis Rally 1979 and 1981, achieving the brand's best rally results in the ŠKODA 130 RS era.

BEST 1,300 cm³

In 1977, ŠKODA sent its factory team to the Monte Carlo Rally.

Václav Blahna / Lubislav Hlávka,
Svatopluk Kvaizar / Jiří Kotek
and Miloslav Zapadlo/ Jiří Motal
covered 500 training kilometres
every day in the 130s.

ŠKODA team at the finish line in Monte Carlo.
The vehicle with start No. 49 was used by
Václav Blahna / Lubislav Hlávka who won
the under-1,300 cm³ class and came 12th overall.



John Haugland made his debut for the ŠKODA team at the Acropolis Rally 1971. He had a reputation for having unrivalled driving skills with rear-wheel-drive cars, making ŠKODA famous all over Europe by regularly winning his class and beating dozens of much more powerful cars in the overall rankings. He was a three-time winner of the ŠKODA Rally, three-time winner of the Barum Rally and won the Ulster Rally 1989 in a FAVORIT before retiring in 1990.



Monte Carlo Rally 1977: service zone during a break. ŠKODA decided to take part in the longest-established rally in the world. The new ŠKODA 120 had only been on the market since 1976, and the brand's ambition for it was to achieve export success, one of the few sources of hard currency at that time.



Great Success

The event saw 198 crews appear on the start line, and 45 of them finished the race, including two Š 130 RSs. Blahna / Hlávka won their class and came 12th overall, Zapadlo / Motal finished second in their class and 15th overall. A great achievement by a car with an OHV engine of only 1,300 cm³ and just a 4-speed gearbox! Unrivalled in its class in Europe, the ŠKODA 130 RS was a success story, including at the Acropolis Rally that was part of the Manufacturer World Championship series: Miloslav Zapadlo / Jiří Motal finished 9th in 1978, Václav Blahna with Jiří Motal (1979) and Václav Schovánek (1981) came 8th overall on both occasions.

One of the highlights of the 130 era was the Manufacturers' Cup of the European Circuit Racing Championship in 1981 won by Zdeněk Vojtěch / Břetislav Enge and Jan Šenkýř / Václav Bervid joined by private teams of Josef Michl / Petr Martinovský / Oldřich Vaníček and Josef Sivík / Adolf Handsome.

The ŠKODA 738 was a concept car (1978), originally with the 1.8 l Š 720 OHC engine, later with an all-aluminium engine taken from the ŠKODA 760 2 × OHC 1.6 l prototype. The car was used in motorsport for just two years.

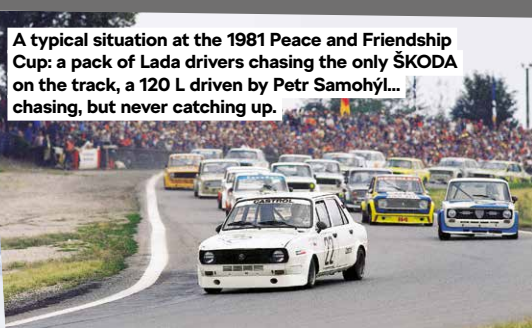
Břetislav Enge (1950–2020), Zdeněk Vojtěch (1951–1998)

Several drivers were involved in the 1981 European Touring Car Championship for ŠKODA, but these two played a starring role. Enge started his career in rally driving but soon switched to circuit racing. He was known for his consistency and virtually identical lap times throughout the race. He finished 2nd in Division I of the European Touring Car Championship in 1979 and was the Czech Champion several times. Vojtěch won the National Uphill Championship in 1976 and finished 2nd (alongside Enge) in Division I of the European Championship in 1979. He also won this division with Josef Michl and Petr Samohýl in 1980. His career climaxed at the 1981 European Championship. He tragically died in a road traffic accident.

European Championship 1980, Pergusa, Sicily: Zdeněk Vojtěch and Břetislav Enge win their class and finish 5th overall.



A typical situation at the 1981 Peace and Friendship Cup: a pack of Lada drivers chasing the only ŠKODA on the track, a 120 L driven by Petr Samohýl... chasing, but never catching up.



Swan song

The homologation of the ŠKODA 130 RS ended in 1983, and it was replaced by the ŠKODA 130 LR with a series-produced saloon body. Although this car did not look as 'spicy' as its predecessor, it turned out to be just as successful. To name just one of its highlights: Ladislav Křeček / Bořivoj Motl finished 13th overall at the Acropolis Rally 1985, despite having start number 56 and having to overtake two to three cars in each special stage. The only items replaced on this car were tyres and brake pads. One more unprecedented story for good measure: Křeček / Motl finished second overall and won the under-2,000 cm³ class at the European Championship event in Boucles de Spa in 1986 – only one car was faster, a Ford Sierra 4x4!



The factory team's site at night: 1985 ŠKODA Rally. The ŠKODA 130 LR No. 21 was used by Jiří Urban / Jiří Klíma who came 7th, the other ŠKODA 130 LR, No. 19, by Gerhard Kalnay / Günter Tazreiter who finished 8th.

The ŠKODA RAPID 130 R/H took part in the Veedol Cup, an endurance race series at Nürburgring, from 1987 to 1989. Taking turns behind the wheel in this 24-hour race were Petr Samohýl, Willi Obermann (German-based ŠKODA dealer) and Svatopluk Kvaizra.



ŠKODA FAVORIT

When the rear-wheel-drive solution became obsolete, the ŠKODA FAVORIT entered the scene in the autumn of 1987.

Going our own way

Choosing a modern "all-in-the-front" solution, ŠKODA was the only car manufacturer behind the Iron Curtain to go its own way. Fitted with a body by Bertone, the vehicle was one of the best in its class. At that time, nobody could have known that the FAVORIT would be ŠKODA's springboard to a great future. ŠKODA was heading in the right direction, and so was society in general: the Velvet Revolution of November 1989 ended a long period of communist experiments. In 1991, the brand became part of the Volkswagen Group, and the new company took a renewed professional approach to motorsport. ŠKODA vehicles continued to dominate their class among the international competition: the four consecutive victories by Pavel Sibera / Petr Gross at the Monte Carlo Rally from 1991 to 1994 illustrate this perfectly. 1993 saw the launch of the Formula 2 World Championship, a competition designed for cars with a single driven axle and naturally aspirated engine of up to 2,000 cm³. ŠKODA entered the championship with FAVORITs with displacements of just 1.3 litres. The first run of the series was thrilling from start to finish, and the brand achieved a great result: second place!



The FAVORIT made its international rallying debut in August 1989 at the 1,000 Lakes Rally: 180 cars on the start line, of which only 60 completed the event. The FAVORIT driven by Kalevi Aho / Miko Hakala finished 25th overall; Ladislav Křeček / Bořivojem Motl came 36th.



1994 saw ŠKODA FAVORITs win valuable points at the Rally Australia: Pavel Sibera / Petr Gross won their class and came 13th overall.



In 1990, the ŠKODA FAVORIT appeared in the Veodol Cup again in Group H. The powertrain was a combination of an OHV 1.5 l engine and a 6-speed gearbox. The under-1.6 l class of the 24 h race was again won by Samohýl, Obermann and Kvaizar.

According to plan

The motorsport team had only one ambition in 1994 – to win the F2 World Cup. The fact that the FAVORIT's engine volume was relatively small and the corresponding output was low would not stop them; everything went according to plan. The Acropolis, Rally, an event with a reputation for writing off more cars than any other rally, saw the brand's two crews, Emil Triner / Jiří Klíma and Pavel Sibera / Petr Gross, take the first two places in their category and finish in the top ten overall. ŠKODA took the Championship lead and held it until the very end. Winning the FIA World Cup was a great achievement as the curtain fell on the FAVORIT era. Next up was the ŠKODA FELICIA, introduced in September 1994.



The brand's historic victory in the 1994 FIA Manufacturers' Cup. Standing from left are drivers Emil Triner, Vladimír Berger, Jindřich Štolfa, Pavel Sibera, kneeling from left are navigators Jiří Klíma, Pavel Štanc, Miroslav Fanta, Petr Gross.

Pavel Sibera / Petr Gross won their class and came 25th overall (out of 75 cars that completed the event) at the 1991 Monte Carlo Rally. 100 duos did not make it to the finish line.



The FAVORIT was a tool with an outstanding performance. Later, it also became the first car of the factory-backed crew Jaroslav Starý / Miroslav Slámbora.



Pavel Sibera (1962)

Started his racing career on motorbikes, but soon left them for four wheels; he drove a range of ŠKODA rally cars, from the 120 LS to the ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC, which speaks volumes about his driving skills. He had a reliable navigator in Petr Gross. He played a key role in ŠKODA winning the F2 World Cup in 1994. He was crowned the 1999 European Formula 2 Vice-Champion with a ŠKODA OCTAVIA Kit Car and made it into the top ten overall at three World Championship events.

CIRCUIT AND UPHILL

The second half of the 1990s saw ŠKODA vehicles take part in many rallies and races around the world, and the brand's entry into the WRC was just around the corner.

ŠKODA FELICIA KIT CAR

The brand's 1995 World Championship car was the ŠKODA FELICIA Kit Car built in line with the then-new Formula 2 regulations that allowed more extensive modifications. Moreover, 'Kit' cars were faster, more powerful, had more powerful brakes and improved handling; on dry tarmac, they could compete with all-wheel drive vehicles. ŠKODA used a car with a 1,300 cm³ engine as well as one with 1,500 cm³, and one year later also a 1,600 cm³ engine. The brand finished third that season, a solid result considering the car was still in its infancy.

As usual, the last event of the 1996 Championship was the RAC Rally. Ex-world champion Stig Blomqvist drove his FELICIA excellently, just as he did in his younger days, comfortably winning the Formula 2 category and finishing 3rd overall! The season ended with ŠKODA in third place, behind Seat and Renault.

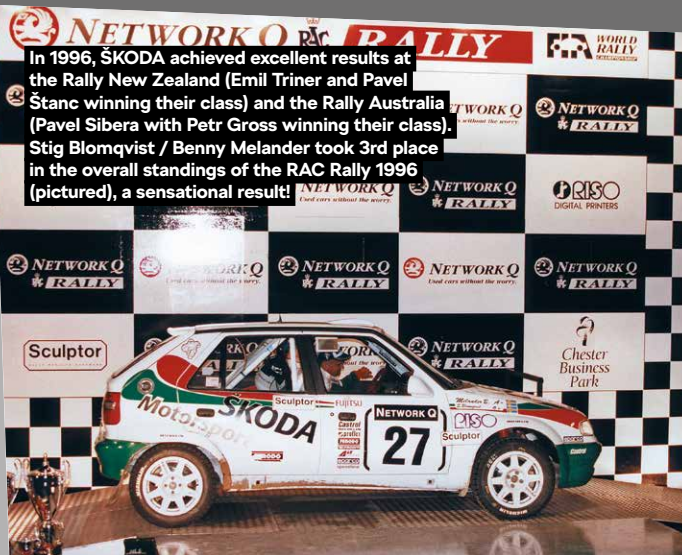
The Mladá Boleslav team made an excellent start to the 1997 World Championship. The Monte Carlo Rally in January saw ŠKODAs dominate the F2 category. Triner won, Sibera came second, and on top of that, they finished 11th and 12th overall. The brand performed well, even though a completely new model was already in the pipeline. Coming in second at the end of the Championship was a tremendous success.

The ŠKODA FELICIA Kit Car at the Acropolis Rally 1995: excellent 8th place for Pavel Sibera / Petr Gross!



ŠKODA PICK-UP

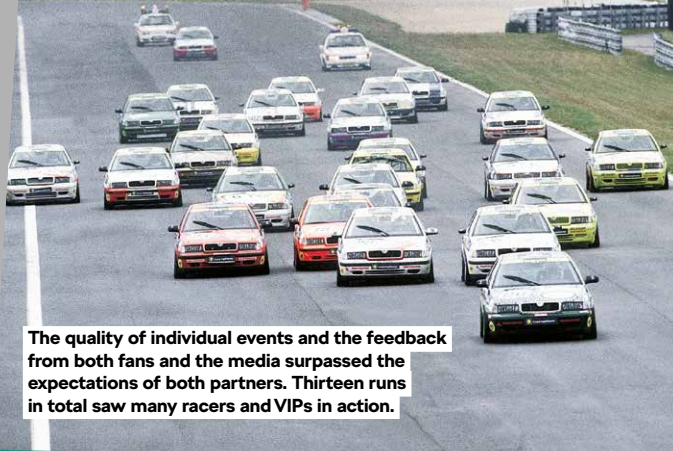
Racing is an appealing yet expensive hobby. The idea for an affordable car was conceived by ŠKODA dealer Ota Zenkl. He used the ŠKODA PICK UP as the basis for success in ten racing seasons, the first in 1996.



In 1996, ŠKODA achieved excellent results at the Rally New Zealand (Emil Triner and Pavel Štanc winning their class) and the Rally Australia (Pavel Sibera with Petr Gross winning their class). Stig Blomqvist / Benny Melander took 3rd place in the overall standings of the RAC Rally 1996 (pictured), a sensational result!

OCTAVIA CUP

The pick-up's success served as the inspiration for establishing a ŠKODA OCTAVIA circuit racing series: the Česká pojišťovna ŠKODA OCTAVIA Cup was born in 1997 and was considered the Czech Republic's best circuit racing series. After a short break, this series resumed in 2017 under a new name – the OCTAVIA Cup and did not lose its appeal.

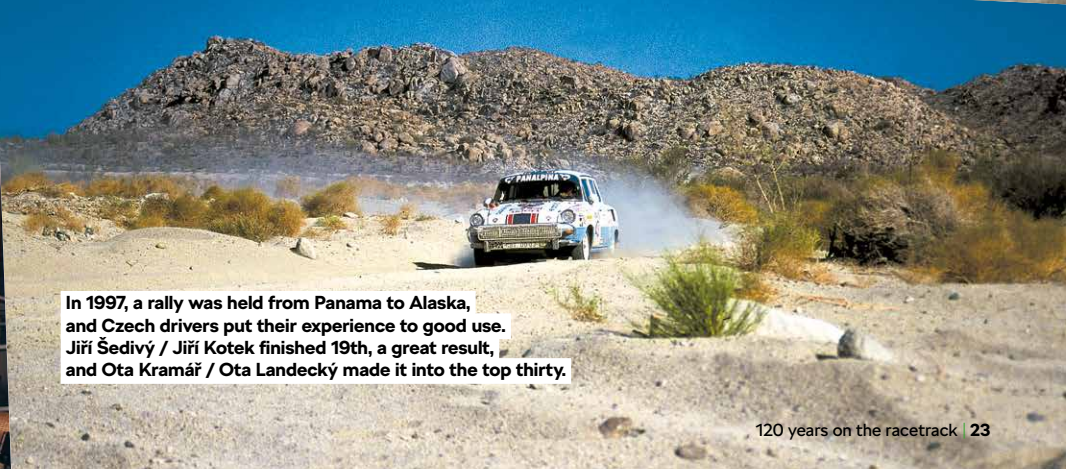


The quality of individual events and the feedback from both fans and the media surpassed the expectations of both partners. Thirteen runs in total saw many racers and VIPs in action.

Marathon races

In 1993 there was a rerun of the London-Sydney 1968 race, this time without support vehicles. Karel Šimek / Ota Landecký finished 75th in a ŠKODA 1000 MB and Jiří Šedivý / Jiří Kotek 77th out of 105 cars in total. Classic cars returned to London–Mexico after two years, and the best result was achieved by Karel Šimek / Ota Měřinský who finished 39th out of more than a hundred crews. In 1998 the Shield of Africa, a 12,000 km marathon rally, took place, and Karel Šimek / Ota Kramář finished in the middle of the final standings in a Š 1000 MB. The climax of the marathon era came in the year 2000: a 16,000 km race from London to Sydney. After 59 special stages within 34 days, Jiří Šedivý / Jiří Kotek came 26th and Josef Michl / Marek Šimík were 39th overall.

The pick-ups were fitted with 1.3 l and later also 1.5 l engines. A total of 25 race cars were produced and appeared in both circuit races and uphill events. The solution was smart, and, as you can see, offered a lot of bang for the buck.



In 1997, a rally was held from Panama to Alaska, and Czech drivers put their experience to good use. Jiří Šedivý / Jiří Kotek finished 19th, a great result, and Ota Kramář / Ota Landecký made it into the top thirty.

ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC

In 1997, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) issued new technical specifications for the World Rally Car (WRC). In response, the brand began developing the ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC with a twenty-valve supercharged four-cylinder 2 l engine and all-wheel-drive.

Autumn 1998: Motorsport team building the ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC.



First test miles



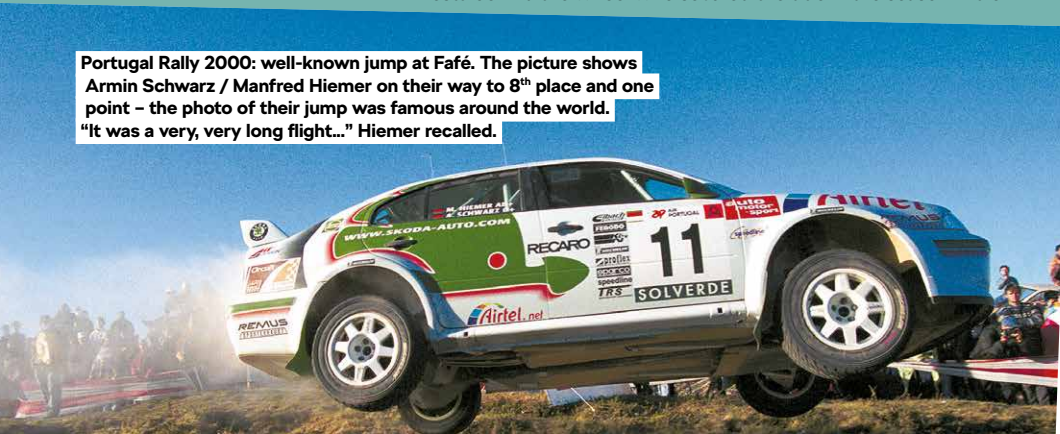
First encounter

The electronics malfunctioned at the Monte Carlo Rally and Portugal Rally in 1999. Both ŠKODAs overcame the pitfalls of the track at the Rally Acropolis in Greece: Armin Schwarz finished 12th overall with Emil Triner right behind him. The last event of the championship, the British Network Q Rally, saw Bruno Thiry finish fourth, a great result!

Let's go on Safari!

The Safari Rally turned out to be the season highlight for the ŠKODA team. The African debut was a success: Schwarz crossed the finish line in Nairobi in seventh place, Luis Climent came 8th. The Catalunya Rally, a tarmac event, saw the OCTAVIA WRC win its first special stage. The OCTAVIAS were on top form, and Schwarz confirmed this with a 5th place finish at the Acropolis Rally. In 2000, the ŠKODA OCTAVIA WRC took part in the Czech National Championship with a young Roman Kresta behind the wheel who secured the title in the season finale.

Portugal Rally 2000: well-known jump at Fafé. The picture shows Armin Schwarz / Manfred Hiemer on their way to 8th place and one point – the photo of their jump was famous around the world. "It was a very, very long flight..." Hiemer recalled.

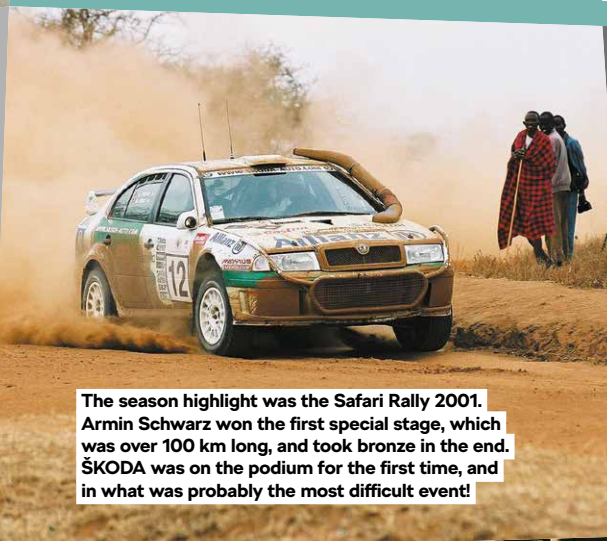


2001

Armin Schwarz / Manfred Hiemer were joined by Bruno Thiry / Stéphane Prévot for the 2001 season that kicked off in Monte Carlo in January. Schwarz won his first three points coming fourth, with ŠKODA taking the first four points. Thiry came eighth, a satisfying result for the team. Schwarz won several more points in both the Drivers' Cup and the Manufacturers' Cup, finishing 5th in the UK at the end of the season. ŠKODA finished 5th in the Manufacturers' World Championship. Kresta in an OCTAVIA WRC comfortably defended his Czech Championship, sealing victory two events before the end of the season.



What happened at the 2001 Rally Argentina has never been seen before in the motoring world: two ŠKODA vehicles were destroyed while waiting for a time check as a fire engine overturned onto them. Manager Jens Pohlmann was seriously injured; the drivers and navigators escaped unharmed.



The season highlight was the Safari Rally 2001. Armin Schwarz won the first special stage, which was over 100 km long, and took bronze in the end. ŠKODA was on the podium for the first time, and in what was probably the most difficult event!

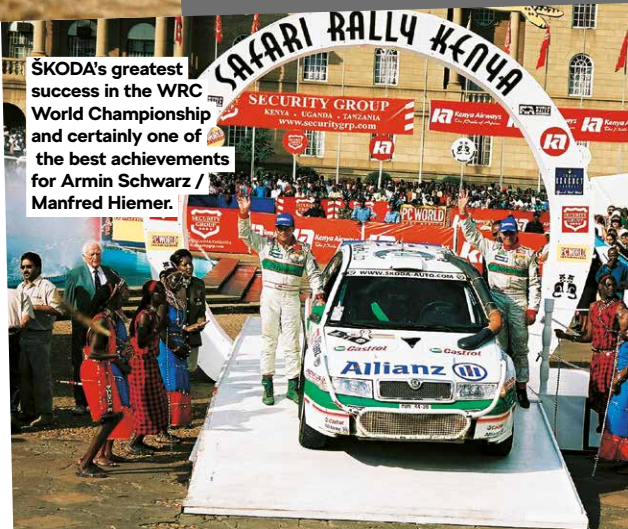
Two women

ŠKODA hired Toni Gardemeister of Finland and Kenneth Eriksson, an experienced Swede, for the 2002 World Championship, and Roman Kresta and Stig Blomqvist of Sweden, 1984 World Champion, were prepared to take turns behind the wheel of a third OCTAVIA WRC. ŠKODA was the only factory team with two female navigators, Tina Thörner (with Eriksson) and Anna Goni (with Blomqvist). The team won their first points as late as the Argentina Rally, coming 5th (Gardemeister) and 6th (Eriksson).

Armin Schwarz (1963)

Came to Czechoslovakia in 1986 to take part in the ŠKODA Rally and Barum Rally. He made his World Championship debut in 1988. He became a ŠKODA Motorsport contract driver in 1999 and contributed a great deal to the further development of the OCTAVIA WRC over the following three seasons. He is not only a successful racer but also an excellent test driver. In 2001, he took ŠKODA to the podium for the first time in the top category of the WRC on the Safari Rally.

ŠKODA's greatest success in the WRC World Championship and certainly one of the best achievements for Armin Schwarz / Manfred Hiemer.





The ŠKODA FABIA WRC was launched at the 2003 Geneva Motor Show and made its debut at the Deutschland Rally in the middle of the same year.

ŠKODA FABIA

ŠKODA Motorsport had gained considerable experience with the OCTAVIA, but now the ŠKODA FABIA WRC's time in the limelight had come. It was more compact and lighter, and expectations were high.

Unforgettable Colin

The FABIA WRC only achieved a handful of sixth places in its two and a half seasons, but Colin McRae enchanted fans with his heroic fight for a podium place at the 2005 Rally Australia. However, the technology the team used could not stave off the competition. They disbanded and the cars were sold to private drivers with the guarantee of technical assistance. Jan Kopecký / Filip Schovánek in a FABIA WRC finished 5th at both the 2006 Catalunya Rally and the 2007 Deutschland Rally.



Toni Gardemeister / Paavo Lukander at the 2003 Rally Australia. Gardemeister received the Star of the Event award – driving his car one-handed, having broken the other.



Monte Carlo Rally 2009: an excellent premiere for the ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000. Jan Kopecký / Petr Stary finished 4th in their first appearance. The photo shows their car being serviced by mechanics during a break.

FABIA Super 2000 IRC

2006 saw the launch of a new series, the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC). A derivative of the FABIA II, the ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 made its debut on the brand's test circuit on 14 January 2008. A year of hard work, tests, and fine-tuning ensued. The new FABIA premiered at the 2009 Monte Carlo Rally, with Jan Kopecký / Petr Stary and Juho Hänninen / Mikko Markkula in two vehicles. The Czech duo came 4th, the Finns had an accident. The two FABIAs eventually finished 2nd and 6th in their first season.

Azores Rally 2010: Juho Hänninen / Mikko Markkula came in third, but that would not stop them from winning the championship title.



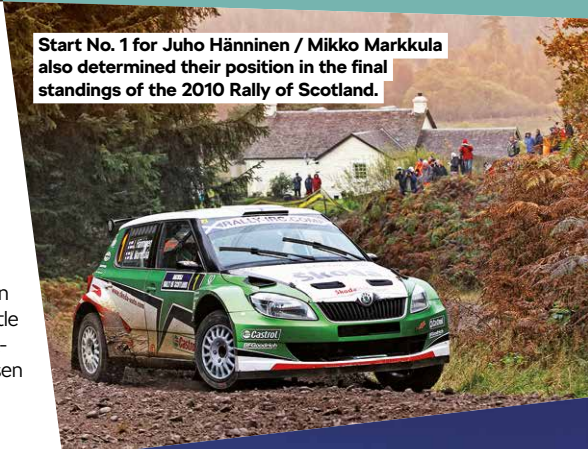
The courageous four

A total of four FABIAs appeared at the Monte Carlo Rally in 2010, finishing 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th. Event No. 3, the Argentina Rally, saw ŠKODA sweep the podium thanks to Hänninen, Wilks and Kopecký! For good measure, ŠKODA also took all podium places in Belgium and in the Czech Republic where the IRC category saw 27 cars in action. ŠKODA secured the Manufacturers' Cup three events before the season finale, and Juho Hänninen / Mikko Markkula were crowned the winners of the IRC, two events before the end of the series at the San Remo Rally. Kopecký / Starý finished second.

Tough championship retention

Defending a win is harder than winning for the first time; the 2011 season saw more than 110 IRC duos in action at some of the events. Hänninen came first and Kopecký second on the Canary Islands, and the brand also won points in Corsica (2nd, 3rd), Yalta (1st, 3rd, 4th) and Belgium (1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th). The ŠKODA team achieved a hatrick of podium finishes on the Azore Islands, then another at the Barum Rally in Czechia. They also secured the championship title in the penultimate event that took place in Scotland. At the last event, the Cyprus Rally, Mikkelsen took the Drivers' Cup after beating Kopecký by 1.5 points. ŠKODA defended both titles.

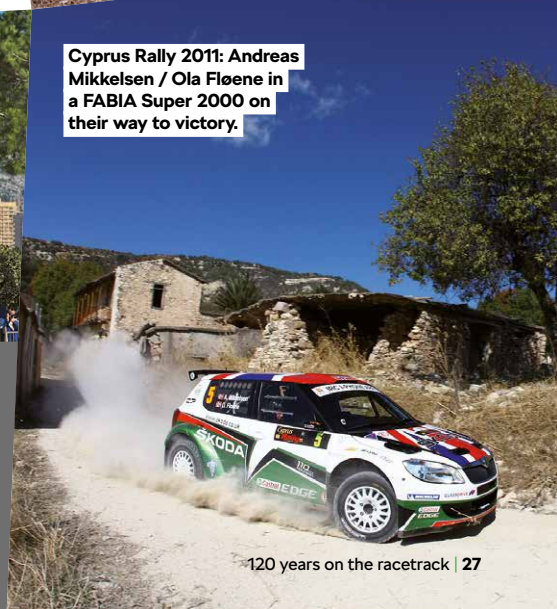
Start No. 1 for Juho Hänninen / Mikko Markkula also determined their position in the final standings of the 2010 Rally of Scotland.



Cyprus Rally 2011: Andreas Mikkelsen / Ola Fløene in a FABIA Super 2000 on their way to victory.



The season premiere at the 2011 Monte Carlo Rally did not go as planned, the decisive factors being fast-changing weather conditions and the choice of tyres. Freddy Loix / Frédéric Miclotte finished second, the other ŠKODA duos came 6th, 7th, 8th and 11th. A few years earlier, everybody would have been thrilled about finishing second!



ŠKODA FABIA SUPER 2000 SWRC

In 2010, the list of World Championship categories was extended to include the SWRC, a competition for S 2000 vehicles. ŠKODA had a few irons in the fire in 2011.

**Yalta Rally 2011:
ŠKODAs finish
1st, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th
and 9th. Kopecký / Starý
on their way to bronze
medals.**



A new team

The brand formed a new team, Red Bull ŠKODA, consisting of Hänninen / Markkula and Hermann Gassner Jr. / Katharina Wüstenhagen. Hänninen was primarily involved in the SRWC World Championship, and where the schedules did not conflict, he also appeared at IRC events. The World Championship was a series of exciting battles taking place in Europe, Mexico and Jordan, and the teams, as well as the fans, had to wait until the last event, Rally Catalunya, for the final outcome. With 133 points, Hänninen / Markkula extended their collection of trophies, and ŠKODA celebrated winning their first-ever World Championship!

Championship title collectors

The IRC series entered its final year in 2012 with ŠKODA Motorsport claiming three drivers' titles in the ICR, the European Championship and the Czech Championship, while ŠKODA claimed a fourth title in the Brands' Championship.

The IRC opened with the Azores Rally; reigning champion Mikkelsen won, Hänninen finished second and Sepp Wiegand of ŠKODA AUTO Deutschland fourth. Another double came ŠKODA's way on the Canary Islands: Kopecký won, Mikkelsen came second. Hänninen won in Croatia, comfortably holding the lead in the IRC. Hänninen / Markkula did similarly well in Belgium, beating seven-time Ypres Rally winner Freddy Loix in a Peugeot. Hänninen had bad luck in Madeira where he finished seventh after two punctures. Nevertheless, he won the Barum Rally Zlin and became the 2012 IRC champion two races before the end of the championship. Having secured the title, ŠKODA Motorsport fielded the 21-year-old Finn Esapekka Lappi with navigator Janne Ferme in the next event that took place in Poland, and the new duo made a winning debut. In the final Rally San Remo, Kopecký finished second, Hänninen retired after an accident.



**Flying is soooo easy! ŠKODA FABIA with
Freddy Loix / Frédéric Miclotte behind
the wheel wins the Ypres Rally 2011.**

**The Rally of Ireland saw the ŠKODA FABIA
sweep the podium: Hänninen first, Mikkelsen
second, Kopecký (pictured) third.**





Český Krumlov Rally: Jan Kopecký / Pavel Dresler on their way to gold. The duo then also won in Hustopeče to seal the overall championship victory.

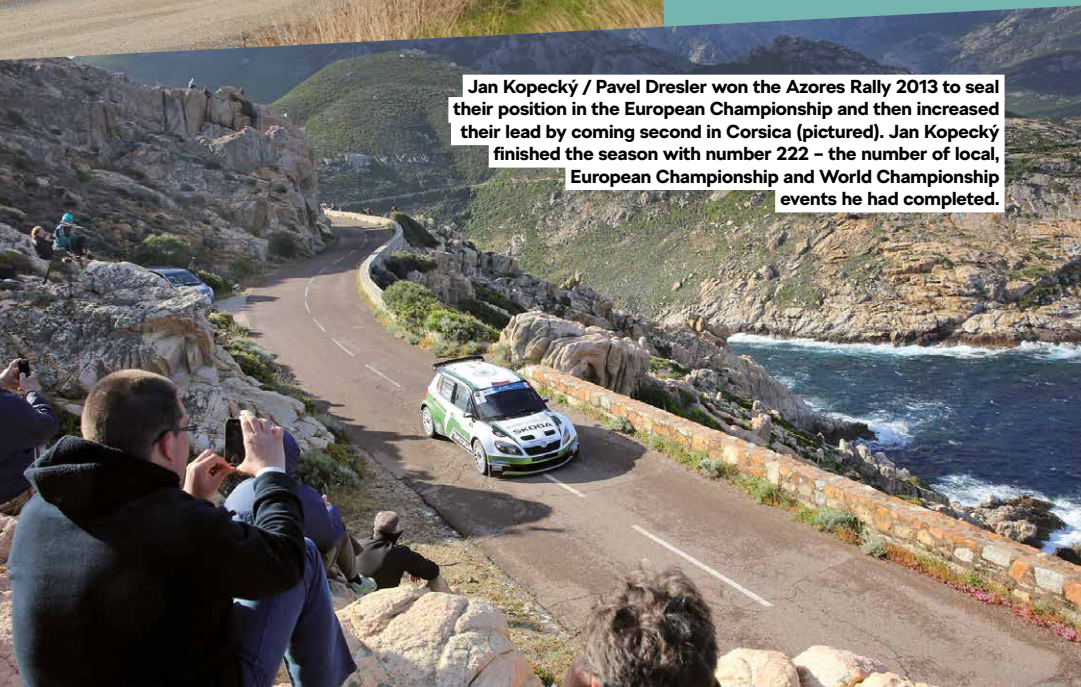
The photo shows Lappi / Ferm winning an Asia Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) event in New Zealand. Gaurav Gill / Glen Macneall in a FABIA won in New Caledonia first and then also in Malaysia. This handed ŠKODA and Gill / Macneall the Championship title.



Veni, vidi, vici

In 2013, the team's FABIA's were used by two duos: Lappi / Ferm and Kopecký / Dresler. Important change: as the IRC was abandoned the previous year, the European Championship took priority. The story that year went as follows; first event, the Jänner Rally in Austria – Czech duo win. Canary Islands – Kopecký wins for the third time. Rally Portugal – the Finns celebrate victory after taking the lead in the first special stage and maintained it to the end. Barum Rally – Kopecký / Dresler win all nine special stages. Poland – Kopecký / Dresler came third to secure the European Championship before the next rally scheduled to take place in Croatia. In other words, another great season full of wins. And to cap it all, ŠKODA Motorsport announced their plan to launch the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in 2015.

Jan Kopecký / Pavel Dresler won the Azores Rally 2013 to seal their position in the European Championship and then increased their lead by coming second in Corsica (pictured). Jan Kopecký finished the season with number 222 – the number of local, European Championship and World Championship events he had completed.



ŠKODA FABIA R5

The latest chapter in motorsport under the ŠKODA brand is the FABIA R5. Its history began in 2014.

New Caledonia is already familiar with the ŠKODA brand, as well as the fact that its teams come there to take the winner's trophy. The Czechs win, Gaurav Gill / Glen Macneall (also in a FABIA) come second.



A new challenge

Kopecký and Dresler were given a new task in 2014: The European Champions will attempt to win the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), so far dominated by local drivers... The Czechs collected 190 points at events in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Australia, Malaysia, Japan and China to win the APRC by 72 points!

Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler travelled a lot throughout Asia and enjoyed a great deal of success, too. This photo shows them at the last APRC event in China where they came second to seal a comfortable overall victory.



Premiere in Krumlov

In 2012, the FIA introduced a new rally class to replace the Super 2000 – the R5. The objective is to make rallying cheaper, i.e. make it accessible to a wider range of potential teams and drivers. ŠKODA introduced the FABIA R5 for the 2015 season. With Kopecký / Dresler behind the wheel, the vehicle premiered in Český Krumlov. They won five domestic competitions in a row to win another Czech championship title. 2016 saw them repeat the same trajectory. The greatest challenge was the World Championship where ŠKODA was widely expected to comfortably win the Manufacturers' Cup – ŠKODA met those expectations by winning ten of the total of 14 events.

ŠKODA won four events and was crowned WRC 2 champion, Esapekka Lappi / Janne Ferm won in Poland (pictured), and Finland and finished third in the Drivers' Cup.



Ten and thirteen

As if the previous season was not exciting enough, let's take a glimpse at 2017. The WRC 2 Championship involved 13 events, of which the ŠKODA FABIA R5 won ten; Pontus Tidemand / Jonas Andersson alone took four wins. If we wanted to write the history of the WRC2, carbon paper would come in handy. The 2018 season again involved thirteen events: this time, eleven wins for the ŠKODA FABIA R5.

Pontus Tidemand / Emil Axelsson practising the high long jump at the Rally Portugal 2017. Can you guess how high they are above the ground?



Two groups

In 2019, the World Championship was split into two groups. The FIA launched the WRC 2 Pro for car manufacturers, while the WRC 3 was intended for private teams. 2019 became the most successful year in ŠKODA's motorsport history. Kalle Rovanperä / Jonne Halttunen of Finland won the WRC 2 Pro category of the World Championship. Jan Kopecký with Pavel Dresler & Jan Hloušek as navigators helped ŠKODA win the Manufacturers' Cup. Pierre-Louis Loubet / Vincent Landais (FRA), a ŠKODA customer team, triumphed in the WRC 2. Other FIA championships were won by FABIA R5 drivers appearing in the European Rally Championship (ERC), the Junior European Rally Championship (FIA ERC1), the African Rally Championship (ARC) and the North America and Central America Championship (NACAM). Other ŠKODA customer teams won a total of 23 national championships.

No matter who is behind the wheel, ŠKODA scores points – and most often for first place like at the 2019 Rally Portugal won by Kalle Rovanperä / Jonne Halttunen.



The thrill fans experience by watching these "seven-mechanic concerts" is the same as when their favourite duo is passing. They are as great as those behind the wheel. Rally Zlín 2019.



Jan Kopecký (1982)

Became the CZ International Karting Champion at the age of sixteen. He started his ŠKODA racing career in pick-up races. As a ŠKODA Motorsport member, Jan gradually became our most successful rally driver in modern history, as documented in this publication. He has made appearances on all rallying continents, always as one of the best; he and Pavel Dresler, his long-standing navigators, were the first WRC 2 World Champions (in a ŠKODA FABIA R5).

2018: Five wins for Jan Kopecký / Pavel Dresler, three for Pontus Tidemand. It is worth mentioning that before this series started, Kopecký was not expected to take part. He was offered to go to Monte Carlo, which he won, and the team said they would consider fielding him again. Then he was called up to Corsica ... and won once more!



Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler won the local championship again. Five appearances, five wins. Plus, a total of 23 consecutive wins at local events from 2014 to 2018. A bitter pill for their rivals.



Who will beat ŠKODA?

So far, only COVID-19 has beaten the brand as well as hitting the whole world. Many rallies planned in the Czech Republic and around the globe had to be cancelled in the 2020 season. Ten events were cancelled in the WRC / WRC 2 / WRC 3 schedules; seven took place, six were counted. The final standings of the 2020 WRC 2 season: with 108 points, Pontus Tidemand / Patrik Barth finished second, four points behind Mads Østberg / Torstein Eriksen.

