

## Victory for Václav Vondřich in 1905: A milestone in Škoda Motorsport History

- › Škoda's successful involvement in motorsport dates back to 1901
- › On 25 June 1905, Václav Vondřich won the significant Coupe Internationale des Motocyclettes race in Dourdan, riding the L&K CCR twin-cylinder motorcycle
- › Škoda Museum commemorates 130 years of the Czech automaker with a special exhibition

**Mladá Boleslav, 25 June 2025 – 120 years ago, factory rider Václav Vondřich claimed victory on a Laurin & Klement CCR motorcycle in the challenging Coupe Internationale des Motocyclettes race, the unofficial world championship held in Dourdan. This marked the pinnacle for motorcycles from Mladá Boleslav in international racing, as Laurin & Klement launched the production of automobiles in autumn 1905. Today, the globally active Czech car manufacturer celebrates its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special exhibition at the Škoda Museum in its hometown Mladá Boleslav.**

### **"The Travelling Blacksmith"**

Václav Vondřich (1874–1943) was a trained file maker and a Czech cycling pioneer. Just two years after Laurin & Klement was founded in Mladá Boleslav, Vondřich began assembling bicycles using components from the company in 1897. He became only the 26<sup>th</sup> person in Prague to acquire a driving licence in 1902, and by September that same year, he had already secured multiple victories riding motorcycles from Mladá Boleslav in races across Bohemia, Austria, Germany, and Italy.

From 26 February 1904, Vondřich was a factory rider for the rapidly growing Laurin & Klement company. On 25 September 1904, he competed in the Coupe Internationale des Motocyclettes in Dourdan, France, an event regarded at the time as the unofficial world championship. Initially leading, Vondřich's chances were scuppered by nails scattered on the track, and he finished fifth. The following year, on 25 June 1905, he returned, this time taking the precaution of carrying a leather bag with spare parts and tools, which earned him the nickname 'the travelling blacksmith'. After 216 kilometres, during the fourth of five laps, Vondřich took the lead, eventually winning on his L&K CCR twin-cylinder motorcycle ahead of competitors from England, France, Germany, and Austria, with a time of 3:05:15. He reached speeds exceeding 100 km/h on the straights.

### **Laurin & Klement and Škoda**

In the founding days of the company in 1895, Laurin & Klement initially produced bicycles known by the designation "Slavia". In 1899, the company started sketching own motorcycle designs, which featured either air or water-cooled engines. The brand's motorsport journey on two wheels already began in 1901 and in March 1904, the Laurin & Klement CCCC model

was one of the world's first four-cylinder motorcycles. The company from Mladá Boleslav reached its motorcycling peak with the Dourdan victory in 1905, before motorcycle production was gradually phased out to free up capacity for the first automobiles as the sector was more promising. Back then, the company achieved numerous successes, both in motorsport competitions and sales to customers across Europe and even overseas. After merging with the Plzeň-based engineering group in 1925, the Škoda brand name was adopted. Since 1991, Škoda Auto has been under the umbrella of the Volkswagen Group turning from a regional market leader at that time into a globally successful car manufacturer. Last year, it produced over 925,000 vehicles for customers in almost 100 markets.

**Exhibition: 130 years of the Mladá Boleslav-based carmaker**

This year, Škoda commemorates 130 years since its foundation. A comprehensive exhibition highlighting key milestones and intriguing facts will be open at the Škoda Museum in Mladá Boleslav until 11 January 2026. Visitors are welcome daily from 09:00 to 17:00. More details and the latest news are available at [museum.skoda-auto.com](https://museum.skoda-auto.com), as well as on the museum's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

**Contact****Anežka Boudná**

Classic Communications

+420 734 298 801

[anezka.boudna@skoda-auto.cz](mailto:anezka.boudna@skoda-auto.cz)**Media images****Victory for Václav Vondřích in 1905: A milestone in Škoda Motorsport History**

'The travelling blacksmith' Václav Vondřích, with his leather bag full of tools and spare parts, was the winner of the unofficial world motorcycle championship in Dourdan on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1905. To his right is the factory owner, Václav Klement.

Source: Škoda Auto



### **Victory for Václav Vondřich in 1905: A milestone in Škoda Motorsport History**

A leather bag with spare parts and tools earned Václav Vondřich the nickname 'the travelling blacksmith'. In 1905, after 216 kilometres, during the fourth of five laps, Vondřich took the lead, eventually winning on his L&K CCR twin-cylinder motorcycle ahead of competitors from England, France, Germany, and Austria, with a time of 3:05:15. He reached speeds exceeding 100 km/h on the straights.

Source: Škoda Auto

### **Škoda Auto**

- › has been successfully following the "Next Level – Škoda Strategy 2030" strategy in the new decade;
- › aims to become one of the top three best-selling brands in Europe by the end of the decade with attractive offers in entry-level segments and additional electric models;
- › effectively exploits the potential in important growth markets such as India, North Africa, Vietnam and the ASEAN region;
- › It currently offers customers 12 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
- › in 2024, it delivered more than 926,000 vehicles to customers worldwide;
- › has been part of the Volkswagen Group, one of the world's most successful car manufacturers, for more than 30 years;
- › is part of Brand Group CORE, an organisational merger of the Volkswagen Group's volume brands, with the aim of achieving joint growth and significantly increasing the overall efficiency of all five volume brands;
- › As a Volkswagen Group brand, it independently develops and produces components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions for other Group brands;
- › operates three production plants in the Czech Republic; has production capacities in China, Slovakia and India, mostly through group partnerships, as well as in Vietnam and Ukraine in cooperation with a local partner;
- › It employs around 40,000 people worldwide and is active in almost 100 markets.