

A legend returns to Le Mans: Škoda Sport back on the famous circuit after 75 years

- › In 1950, the Škoda Sport took part in the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans as the last Czech vehicle with a Czech crew
- › Two copies of the sports car based on the "Tudor" were built; the four cylinder 1,089 cm³/ 50 hp (37 kW) engine reached a top speed of 140 km/h
- › 75 years later, the original Škoda Sport returned to the iconic circuit, coinciding with the Czech carmaker's 130th anniversary
- › From 3 to 6 July, the car with its unique story once again drew well-deserved attention on the Le Mans track

Mladá Boleslav, 7 July 2025 – Seventy-five years ago, Škoda lined up for the first time at the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans with the Škoda Sport racing special. This unique car, meticulously restored to its original condition, has since made several return appearances on the renowned circuit as part of the prestigious Le Mans Classic for historic sports cars. This year, as Škoda celebrates its 130th anniversary, the car was again among the highlights of the event, also due to its performance on the track.

It is 24 June 1950. The second hand of the starting clock ticks past 16:00. Škoda's racing driver Václav Bobek sprints across the start line, quickly slides behind the wheel of the Škoda Sport, car number 44, and sets off on his first 13.65 km lap at Le Mans. "Every time we climb into this original cockpit on this iconic circuit, we picture the Bobek-Netušil crew taking the start in 1950. It's a truly special moment for Škoda and for us personally," say Stanislav Kafka and Michal Velebný, the pair responsible for bringing this unique car back to Le Mans in recent years.

Le Mans 1950: the first and only appearance

Škoda's entry in the 1950 Le Mans endurance race was a rare sight in its day. Europe had already been divided by the Iron Curtain, making the car from Mladá Boleslav a curiosity on the starting grid of the world's toughest endurance race. The two-seater special, with its hand-built aluminium bodywork, was based on modified components from the 1946 Škoda 1101 'Tudor' production model and made use of many standard parts. By dawn, the Škoda Sport held second place in its class for cars up to 1,100 cm³ and fifth overall on the performance index. After 13 hours – having averaged 126 km/h – a broken piston pin circlip dashed any hope of a surprise result. As the race regulations prevented this small, technical fault, from being repaired on site, lap 121 proved to be Škoda's last at Le Mans.

Targeted technical adjustments for optimal performance on the track

The Škoda Sport features two additional headlights for better illumination during the night and special openings in the radiator grille optimized for the cooling of the drum brakes on the front wheels. An extended wheelbase of 2,150 mm ensures improved driving stability. The vehicle weighed in at 700 kg including tools and spare parts. The water-cooled four-cylinder engine with a displacement of 1,089 cm³ delivered an output of 50 hp (37 kW) at 5,200 rpm for a top speed of 140 km/h. The electrics were delivered by the Czech manufacturer PAL 12 V. The special fuel mix consisted of petrol, ethanol and acetone. The consumption of 12 litres per 100 km was low for its time compared to the competitors. Therefore, the Škoda crew had to refuel less often.

Back where history was made

Thanks to its start at Le Mans and its strong performance on the prestigious track 75 years ago, the original Škoda Sport as well as its drivers Václav Bobek and Jaroslav Netušil have a permanent place among racing legends. The vehicle now regularly competes in the prestigious Le Mans Classic. The 1950 Le Mans special – one of only two ever built – was long thought lost but was eventually rediscovered and brought back to life through a careful restoration that preserved as many original components as possible. The car's aluminium body still bears the scars of battles fought on the race track more than seven decades ago. After a six-year restoration, the car made its return to the circuit in 2022. Last weekend, from 3 to 6 July 2025, it once again lined up on the starting grid, commemorating both the endurance racing tradition and this year's 130th anniversary of the Škoda brand. The crew Michal Velebný/Stanislav Kafka in Škoda's racing special finished in 36th place on the performance index.

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Media images



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Source: Škoda Auto



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- › It currently offers customers 12 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Elroq, Enyaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
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