

Škoda 130 RS (1975): A star on both sides of the Iron Curtain

- › The Škoda 130 RS was one of the most successful rally and racing cars in Europe in the late 1970s and early 1980s
- › In 1981, Škoda was crowned European champion in the brand classification of the European Touring Car Championship with the 130 RS
- › The brand chalked up numerous successes with the car in the World Rally Championship, including victory in the 1977 Monte Carlo Rally
- › The output of the traditional OHV engine with 1,300 cm³ displacement mounted behind the rear wheels was increased to 142 hp in Mladá Boleslav
- › Almost 200 units of the Škoda 130 RS were produced in its original factory specification

Mladá Boleslav, 12 October 2026 – Drivers loved it, rivals feared it, on the tracks it commanded more respect than any other Škoda before it. Long considered the best sports car from Mladá Boleslav, the Škoda 130 RS was first presented to the public 51 years ago.

Following the successful era of Škoda's first rear-wheel-drive car, the Škoda 1000 MB, the time came for an upgrade in 1969 – and the world was introduced to the Škoda 100/110 L models. These differed from their predecessor mainly in their new bodywork. The following year, the designers used the basic version to develop the Škoda 110 L Rally and the Škoda 110 R Coupé, which was built at the Kvasiny plant. 1972 saw the launch of the Škoda 120 S Rally – a sports car that competed more often on domestic race tracks in the 1970s than any other vehicle.

With the ambition to also do well in the overall rankings at international rallies, the B5-category vehicles were introduced in 1974, namely the Škoda 180 RS and the Škoda 200 RS. These, however, could not obtain homologation for races abroad; their primary mission was to raise the standard of domestic rallies and try out new design elements. Ultimately, all the previously mentioned vehicles were eclipsed by a racing car that combined the best features of them all and went on to become a legend of Czechoslovak motor racing – the Škoda 130 RS.

The new Škoda 130 RS Coupé (Type 735) made its circuit debut in Most in April 1975. The RS showed what it was capable of less than a month later during a round of the European Touring Car Championship in Brno, where it took 3rd and 4th place in the under-2,000 cm³ class at its debut appearance. At that time, a five-speed gearbox was being used, but a year later, the FIA changed the regulations and the Škoda 130 RS had to revert to a four-speed gearbox, to which it remained faithful until the end of its sporting career.

The drivetrain of the Škoda 130 RS consisted of a classic, water-cooled four-cylinder engine with OHV valve control, installed behind the rear axle. The first sales version had a power

output of 82.8 kW (112.5 hp) at 7,250 rpm, gradually rising to 105 kW (142 hp) at 8,500 rpm as the circuit car developed.

The engine with its aluminium cylinder and crankcase had evolved from the series-production four-cylinder engines, but unlike these, it featured a cast-iron cylinder head with eight valves and dry-sump lubrication. The displacement increased from the original 1,289 cm³ to the limit for the under-1,300 cm³ class – exactly 1,299.6 cm³.

The greatest strength of the Czechoslovak coupé, however, was its handling; its light and well-balanced design helped drivers not only around the bends but also on straights, in jumps and when they pushed the accelerator to the limit and literally had to fight against the laws of physics. In such situations, the Škoda 130 RS always proved to be a reliable partner, and its drivers were able to hold their own even among the more powerful competition.

Unlike the Škoda 180/200 RS, the smaller RS could also be driven abroad in Europe, mainly in the West. The Škoda 130 RS got off to a very successful start, both in rallying and on the circuits. It opened its first rally season in 1976, and just one year later, it took class victory in the Monte Carlo Rally, finishing 12th overall (driver team Blahna/Hlávka). In the 1978 season, the Zapadlo/Motal driver team finished first in its class and 9th overall in the Škoda 130 RS at the Acropolis Rally. One year later, the Škoda 130 RS even finished 8th overall in the toughest European rally. Throughout its career, the rally coupé achieved many outstanding successes at the national and international level. In the A2 class under 1,600 cm³, it regularly beat even the stronger competition. Its official career on domestic tracks ended in the 1983 season, but the Škoda 130 RS was still on the road for many years afterwards as a training and autocross vehicle.

The Škoda 130 RS not only enjoys a definitive place in rallying but also in the history of the European Touring Car Championship. The brand from Mladá Boleslav completed the full season in this prestigious series for the first time in 1978. Until then, the focus had been on the circuits of the former Eastern Bloc. At its very first appearance, Škoda took third place in the brand classification, competing against renowned manufacturers. One year later, the Škoda 130 RS achieved second place in the overall standings, and in 1980, third place behind Audi and BMW, as well as first place in its class. While it was widely believed that this was the most a circuit coupé from Czechoslovakia could achieve, the Škoda 130 RS was about to achieve its greatest success: in 1981, the Czechoslovakian racing car with a 1.3 OHV engine fought its way to the top of the overall standings after a tough season, and Škoda won the title in the European Touring Car Championship. The competitors were shaking their heads in disbelief, and the drivers of the Škoda 130 RS, Zdeněk Vojtěch, Břetislav Enge, Jan Šenkýř, Petr Martinovský, Josef Michl and a few others – as well as the cars themselves – were in the spotlight of the European sports media.

Today, both the rally version and the circuit version of the Škoda 130 RS are prominent stars at the Škoda Museum and regularly take part in commemorative events. Almost 200 original vehicles were built between 1975 and 1980, and several dozen were also assembled from original parts in the Svazarm (a paramilitary/Boy Scout organisation in Communist Czechoslovakia).

Contact

Vítězslav Kodym

Head of Product Communications

+420 604 292 131

vitezslav.kodym@skoda-auto.cz

Kateřina Boukalová

Spokesperson Product Communications

+420 734 299 812

katerina.boukalova@skoda-auto.cz

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- › aims to become one of the top three best-selling brands in Europe by the end of the decade by offering its customers the best of both worlds through a range of attractive BEV, hybrid & ICE products;
- › effectively exploits the potential in important growth markets such as India, Vietnam and the ASEAN region;
- › currently offers customers 14 passenger car model ranges: Fabia, Scala, Octavia, Superb, Kamiq, Karoq, Kodiaq, Epiq, Elroq, Enyaq, Peaq, Slavia, Kylaq and Kushaq;
- › delivered more than 1,040,000 vehicles to customers worldwide in 2025;
- › 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;
- › independently develops and produces components such as MEB battery systems, engines and transmissions for other Volkswagen Group brands;
- › operates three production plants in the Czech Republic; has production capacities in Spain, Slovakia, Kazakhstan and India, mostly through group partnerships, as well as in Vietnam and Ukraine in cooperation with a local partner;
- › employs around 40,000 people worldwide and is active in almost 100 markets.