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WRC 2: Kopecký claims ŠKODA Motorsport's 20th podium finish with the FABIA R5

- › Second place for ŠKODA works driver Jan Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler at the Rally France in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)
- › Five stage wins for the Czech champions

Bastia, 2 October 2016 – Works driver Jan Kopecký (CZ) claimed the 20th podium finish for ŠKODA Motorsport with the FABIA R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). The experienced Czech and his co-driver Pavel Dresler (CZ) finished second at the infamous Rally France on the Mediterranean island of Corsica. Asphalt specialist Kopecký was embroiled in a thrilling battle with eventual winner Elfyn Evans (GB) over 390.92 kilometres against the clock, and underlined his class with victory on five of the ten special stages.

"We would obviously have liked to win, but congratulations to Elfyn Evans on his deserved victory. We are pleased to have reached a small milestone. We are proud to have racked up 20 podium finishes for ŠKODA Motorsport on the global platform that is WRC 2 since our FABIA R5 made its debut last year. Our thanks go out to the entire team," said Michal Hrabánek. The ŠKODA Motorsport Director will accept nothing less than success: "We will continue to work hard to improve. There's no time to catch one's breath: we want to be back in contention again next time out at the Rally Spain."

Endless corners, blazing sunshine, and heavy showers on Saturday - the "Rally of 10,000 Corners" put the drivers and cars through their paces over the three days on Corsica. This was underlined by the fact that only four cars in the WRC 2 class completed all stages of the rally. These included two ŠKODA FABIA R5. Frenchman Julien Maurin, at the wheel of his customer car, finished fourth at his home rally.

ŠKODA works driver Kopecký thrilled thousands of spectators along the route with his battle for class victory with Ford driver Elfyn Evans. The very first stage, "Aqua Doria - Albitreccia 1", ultimately proved to be pivotal, with Kopecký dropping 17.9 seconds over the course of 49.72 kilometres. The 34-year-old Czech was playing catch-up from this point on, and although able to close the gap to Evans, courtesy of some blistering times, he was unable to overtake the experienced WRC driver in the overall standings.

As such, Kopecký once again had to settle for second place at the "Tour de Corse" - the same position he occupied for three years in a row between 2011 and 2013. The rally formed part of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) in 2011 and 2012, and belonged to the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) in 2013. The iconic rally returned to the world championship calendar last year. "I'm happy with my performance, although I would obviously have liked to win. The routes on Corsica are always a real test



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for the tyres and brakes – but this time the rain also made it slippery, and thus even more complicated, for the first time,” said the ŠKODA works driver.

The previous seven rounds of the WRC 2 had all been won by a driver in ŠKODA FABIA R5. Works driver Esapekka Lappi (FIN) won his home rally in Finland and in Germany, while team-mate Pontus Tidemand (S) triumphed at the Rally Portugal. Teemu Suninen (FIN) was victorious in a FABIA R5 in Mexico, at the Rally Italy on Sardinia and at the Rally Poland. Nicolás Fuchs (PE) won for ŠKODA at the Rally Argentina.

Elfyn Evans extended his overall lead in the WRC 2 class, and now has 120 points to his name. However, the title race is still wide open, as the Brit has no further opportunities to score points. He has already contested the maximum seven races, in which it is possible to score points towards the overall standings. Suninen (93 points) and ŠKODA works driver Lappi (82) both have a further two opportunities in their FABIA R5 with three races remaining and 25 points on offer for a race win.

The other two ŠKODA works drivers, Jan Kopecký (55 points) and Pontus Tidemand (49), also still have a mathematical chance of clinching the title. For this to be possible, however, they would have to win all three remaining rallies. The first opportunity for Kopecký and Tidemand to underline their title credentials comes at the Rally Spain from 13 to 16 October, where they will represent the ŠKODA Motorsport team.

Result of the Rally France (WRC 2):

1. Evans/Parry (GB/GB)	Ford Fiesta R5	4:14:22.0 hrs
2. Kopecký/Dresler (CZ/CZ)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 0:33.3 min
3. Bonato/Boulloud (F/F)	Citroën DS3 R5	+ 3:39.6 min
4. Maurin/Thimonier (F/F)	ŠKODA FABIA R5	+ 4:10.1 min

The number for the rally: 6

Works driver Jan Kopecký made it onto the podium in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with the ŠKODA FABIA R5 for the sixth time at the Rally France. He finished third at the 2015 Rally Italy on Sardinia, before claiming his maiden WRC 2 victory at the Rally Germany. He followed this with second place at the Rally Spain. This year, Kopecký and co-driver Pavel Dresler finished runner-up at the Rally Italy, Rally Germany and now the Rally France.



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FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Dat</u>
Rally Monte Carlo	21.01.-24.01.2016
Rally Sweden	11.02.-14.02.2016
Rally Mexico	03.03.-06.03.2016
Rally Argentina	21.04.-24.04.2016
Rally Portugal	19.05.-22.05.2016
Rally Italy	09.06.-12.06.2016
Rally Poland	30.06.-03.07.2016
Rally Finland	28.07.-31.07.2016
Rally Germany	18.08.-21.08.2016
Rally China	08.09.-11.09.2016 (cancelled)
Rally France	29.09.-02.10.2016
Rally Spain	13.10.-16.10.2016
Rally Great Britain	27.10.-30.10.2016
Rally Australia	17.11.-20.11.2016

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Media images:



ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in France

Jan Kopecký and Pavel Dresler finished runner-up in the WRC 2 class in their ŠKODA FABIA R5 for the third time this year.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the World Championship rally in France

Kopecký/Dresler have their next opportunity to claim their first win of the season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) at the Rally Spain in a fortnight's time.

[Download](#)

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

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 Tidemand/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).



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ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- > in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- > 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, engines and gear transmissions.
- > operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- > employs over 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.