

17 June 2015

Rounds 13 & 14 – Sochi Autodrom, Russia – 20/21 June 2015

PREVIEW

Russia welcomes the TCR International Series

Three weeks after the last event at the Salzburgring, the TCR International Series will resume this upcoming weekend at the Sochi Autodrom in Russia.

The circuit was designed by German architect Hermann Tilke around the Sochi Olympic Park, the venue of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games that lies on the shores of the Black Sea. It was inaugurated on September 27th, 2013 during the 12th International Investment Forum with a Formula Sochi exhibition race.

The first ever Formula 1 Russian Grand Prix took place there on October 12th, 2014.

Since then, the Sochi Autodrom has hosted rounds of the national series, including the Russian Circuit Racing Series and the Russian Classic Rally Cup; the TCR International Series will be the first international championship other than F1 to visit Sochi, sharing the event with the Russian Circuit Racing Series and the Russian Formula 4 championship.

The programme the will follow the usual pattern: Saturday will feature two thirty-minute Free Practice sessions and one thirty-minute Qualifying, split into Q1 (20 minutes for all drivers) and Q2 (10 minutes for the fastest twelve in Q1).

The two races will then take place on Sunday, back-to-back over a distance of 60 kilometres.

In addition to this, on Friday morning teams will have the opportunity to take part in a 45-minute test session.

TCR in Sochi – the event at a glance

Lap distance: 5.85 km

Race distance: 11 laps (64.33 km)

Start: standing

Grids: determined by Qualifying results (Q1+Q2) with top-10 reversed for Race 2

Timetable:	Saturday, 10:00/10:30	Free Practice 1
	Saturday, 12:35/13:05	Free Practice 2
	Saturday, 15:10/15:45	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Sunday, 12:35	Race 1
	Sunday, 14:05	Race 2

all times: local (GMT +3)



Gleason and Morbidelli to drive the heaviest cars

WestCoast Racing team-mates Kevin Gleason and Gianni Morbidelli will drive the heaviest cars of the field in the next event of the TCR International Series at Sochi Autodrom.

Gleason, who set pole position, won Race 1 and scored 38 points at the Salzburgring, will receive the maximum Success Ballast of 30 kilos.

The sister Honda Civic car of current championship leader Morbidelli – 29 points for him in Austria – will be laden by 20 extra kilos, while the 10 kilos of extra weight for the third best scorer will be allocated to Pepe Oriola's SEAT León as the Spaniard scored 28 points at the Salzburgring.

Russian drivers ready to star in their home race meeting

Sergey Afanasyev and Mikhail Grachev are the only Russian drivers committed to a full season campaign in the TCR International Series.

Afanasyev, 27-year-old from Moscow has built for himself a reputation in single-seaters (Formula Renault, F3, Formula Master, F2, AutoGP) with excellent results between 2004 and 2001, before switching to GT racing and taking the FIA GT Pro-Am title in 2013.

Still, touring cars are completely new to him: *"This is my first experience in touring car racing and with front-wheel drive cars. It's not easy at all, but it's an exciting challenge,"* he admitted. *"I need to say that it would be much more difficult without a team such as Craft-Bamboo Lukoil. It's really great to work with professionals of their level, who are doing their utmost to support my development process and to get me to the level of my team mates, Pepe Oriola and Jordi Gené, two top references in the category."*

Afanasyev, who is currently undertaking a Masters in Economics, seems to be enjoying every moment of his new racing life and looks forward to this weekend: *"I don't know the Sochi track, but I'm very excited: it's home race and it is going to be a big thing..."*

Grachev is not only the sole TCR driver who has already raced at Sochi, he has also written history there, as he won the very first race that inaugurated the track last year, a Russian Circuit Racing Series round held shortly before the Russian F1 Grand Prix.

The 27-year-old from Omsk, who is racing for Liqui Moly Team Engstler, is of course proud of that achievement and excited ahead of his home race: *"It's a nice and fast track, more technical than it looks, where slipstreaming will play a key role. To race in the middle of the Olympic Park is quite special."*



Grachev's career has developed mostly in Russia; he shone in autocross, taking two national titles, and touring cars, with two RCRS titles in 2013 and 2014. Last year he entered the European scene, in the FIA ETCC and the German ADAC Procar, winning races in both series. He has words of praise for the support received at Team Engstler, although the season has been quite challenging so far, because the team has been using two different cars: the Audi TT and SEAT León.

"It has been a roller-coaster until now, he reckons. "My pace has been good, but there have been mistakes and incidents preventing strong finishes. I take it as a learning season, trying to advance step by step."

Dudukalo joins TCR for the Russian event at Sochi

Aleksey Dudukalo is arguably one of the most popular drivers in the panorama of Russian auto racing, collecting a great deal of race victories and national titles in the latest fifteen years on both, tarmac and... ice.

Supported by Lukoil, 'Dudu' was also given the opportunity to race for a couple of seasons in the FIA World Touring Car Championship (claiming one podium result in 2012) before returning to the Russian Circuit Racing Series in which he is currently leading the Touring category at the wheel of a TCR-spec SEAT León.

This weekend at Sochi, Dudukalo will reappear on the international stage competing in the TCR International Series in a SEAT León run by the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil.

"I'm glad to participate in the Sochi event; it's like a homecoming for me, as I know a lot of guys from my WTCC years. TCR is on the rise now, races are filled with a spirit of wheel-to-wheel fighting and that's what the drivers and fans like most!" said Dudukalo.

Live streaming and timing available from Sochi

The TCR International Series event in Russia will receive the usual extensive coverage on the Internet.

Live streaming will be available on the series' official website www.tcr-series.com.

The coverage will begin on Saturday with the Qualifying session at 15.15 local time (14.15 in Central Europe); the two races will be streamed on Sunday back-to-back: Race 1 delayed at 13.20 local time (12.20 in Central Europe) and Race 2 live in succession.

Live timing will also be available on the official website, covering all Saturday's sessions and Sunday's races.



pressrelease



Event at Red Bull Ring replaces Argentina

WSC Ltd has announced that the Argentine round of the TCR International Series will be replaced by an event at the Red Bull Ring on July 12th within the Austrian round of the European Le Mans Series.

CEO Marcello Lotti explained: *"It was not an easy decision to take, but we had to be realistic and consider that the technical development of the new TCR cars is taking more time than expected and going overseas would have forced some brands to skip the event. On the contrary, re-scheduling the event in Europe will give them the opportunity to complete the development steps without further delaying their participation in the races. This is one of the issues you must be prepared to face during the maiden season of a brand new category. We are especially grateful to Gérard Neveu and the whole ELMS staff for giving us the opportunity to join in their event at the Red Bull Ring."*

Neveu, the CEO of ELMS echoed: *"We are pleased to welcome the TCR International Series for the Austrian round of the European Le Mans Series. The TCR Series features many brands and manufacturers and the top class organisation and promotion makes this a welcome addition to the event. The inclusion of this world-class touring car series, alongside the Formula Renault 3.5 series, to the schedule means we will have three leading championships from three motorsport disciplines: endurance, touring cars and single seaters. The event at the Red Bull Ring will be a great celebration of motorsport."*

TCR's visit to Argentina is only postponed. *"South America remains one of our main areas of interest. We are planning to organise a press conference in Buenos Aires in the near future to announce our final plans of racing there next year,"* Lotti said.



www.tcr-series.com