

11 July 2015

Rounds 15 & 16 – Red Bull Ring, Austria – 11/12 July 2015

QUALIFYING REPORT

Morbidelli and Gleason make 1-2 for WestCoast

Gianni Morbidelli and Kevin Gleason emerged as the fastest drivers in today's Qualifying session at the Red Bull Ring.

The Italian was the only competitor able to break the 1:40 mark; his pole position time of 1:39.798 inflicted a six-tenth gap to his own WestCoast Racing teammate, Gleason. This was Morbidelli's third pole in the current season so far.

The 17-year old Hungarian Dániel Nagy created the biggest surprise of the day. On his first appearance in an international event, Nagy qualified his Zengő Motorsport SEAT León in third position just behind the two Honda Civic cars. Nagy even managed to top the SEAT patrol, beating a bunch of more experienced drivers.

Stefano Comini – the current championship leader – claimed fourth position, ahead of Sergey Afanasyev and Pepe Oriola.

After making wonders in this morning's Free Practice sessions, the two Volkswagen Golf cars were not as impressive in Qualifying. Pol Rosell and Mikhail Grachev posted the tenth and ninth fastest laps respectively, meaning that they will share the front row on the top-ten reverse grid for tomorrow's Race 2.

Igor Skuz qualified 11th, however he will be demoted to 16th on the grid for Race 1 as a consequence of a penalty he received for causing an incident with Bas Schouten during the second race at the Salzburgring.

Sunday's races will go green at 8.25 and 11.40 local time, with a distance of 14 laps each.

Qualifying 1: Comini fastest from Belicchi and Morbidelli

Target Competition teammates Stefano Comini and Andrea Belicchi posted the fastest time in the first part of the Qualifying, Comini set a provisional fastest lap of 1:41.226 that Belicchi improved to 1:41.064. Eventually Comini responded with a lap of 1:40.798 that was not to be beaten.

Gianni Morbidelli placed his Honda Civic in third position, only 14 thousandths of a second off Belicchi's time. Mikhail Grachev continued to impress at the wheel of the new Volkswagen Golf, setting the fourth fastest time of 1:41.202.

Diego Romanini was only able to complete a bunch of laps before his Proteam Racing Ford Focus stopped along the track due to a technical failure.

The following drivers advanced to Q2: Comini, Belicchi, Morbidelli, Grachev, Gené, Rosell, Gleason, Afanasyev, Oriola, Skuz, Veglia and Nagy.



Qualifying 2: Morbidelli on pole, Nagy claims third place

Belicchi (1:41.619) and Oriola (1:40.796) set the early pace, but soon Morbidelli annihilated the field with two tremendous laps of 1:40.210 and 1:39.798.

In the dying moments of the session Gleason (1:40.335) secured the full front row on the grid for tomorrow's Race 1 to WestCoast Racing, while Hungarian youngster Dániel Nagy qualified in an impressive third position.

The two Volkswagen Golf cars of Pol Rosell and Mikhail Grachev qualified in tenth and ninth respectively, and won the front row on the grid for Race 2.

SEE RESULTS AT THE END OF THIS RELEASE

What the drivers had to say

Gianni Morbidelli, pole position: *"It was an unexpected pole and I am very happy, because I really love this track and its facilities. I was really impressed by the three quick laps I did, it shows we came a long way since this morning's first free practice. We changed a lot of things in the set-up and made some final adjustments between Q1 and Q2. The track conditions have been changing constantly during the day, given also the rising temperatures and the different tyre compounds left by the other series. We'll see how things will go tomorrow. The start will be key and I hope we can improve from recent races. My objective is clear: to retrieve the championship leadership, so I'm happy to have already taken the five points of the pole."*

Kevin Gleason, second fastest: *"I think I still had a little bit in my car, but there was no way for me to match Gianni's time. Still, I am very happy because the team did a great job improving the set-up throughout the day and I did well also in learning the circuit, which is quite technical. I drove here on new tyres for the first time in Q1, so the results is really not bad!"*

Dániel Nagy, third fastest: *"I cannot believe I am in the top three for my first international outing, in such a competitive series as the TCR. I did know the track for having raced here a couple of years ago in the Suzuki Cup, it's a pretty fast and straightforward track which I like, but I never had driven the SEAT León before this morning. So, I feel really happy to be in the top three and thank Zengő Motorsport for giving me this wonderful opportunity."*



Changing track conditions caused a surprise

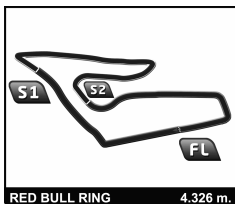
It was a day of surprises for many at the Red Bull Ring, as temperature rose significantly throughout the day while grip conditions kept changing after different series left rubber of different compound on the tarmac.

This explains why performances of some contenders changed drastically between Free Practice 2 and Qualifying.

While some, like the Honda Civic cars of Gianni Morbidelli and Kevin Gleason experienced a dramatic improvement, securing the first row on the grid for Race 1, others that had shone in Practice, like Liqui Moly Team Engstler's new Volkswagen Golf TCR cars, suddenly found themselves in a completely different situation. *"We need to analyze carefully the data, because the performance was simply not the same"*, admitted Mikhail Grachev. His teammate Pol Rosell echoed: *"All of a sudden, we had terrible oversteer and the car became very difficult to drive."*

Michela Cerruti, who is making her TCR debut this weekend, also felt the same: *"It seemed a completely different track, which made my life even more difficult, as I was discovering the car"*. The Italian lady driver, who can claim the title of "Ringmeisterin" since her win last weekend in a VLN round at Nürburgring's Nordschleife, acknowledged: *"It's since 2009 that I don't race on a front-wheel drive car and it was tough at the beginning this morning, especially in such a competitive series as this, but by the end of FP2, I felt much more comfortable. Then, in Q1, I found conditions had changed completely. On top, I also did a mistake following my teammate Comini. It will be better tomorrow in the races, as it is often the case for me."*





4 Hours of Red Bull Ring TCR International Series Qualifying Combined

Final Classification

Nr.	Driver	NAT	Team	Qualifying Sessic	Qualifying Sessic	Time	Gap
1	10 Gianni MORBIDELLI	ITA	West Coast Racing	1:41.078	1:39.716	1:39.716	
2	24 Kevin GLEASON	USA	West Coast Racing	1:41.336	1:40.335	1:40.335	0.619 0.619
3	43 Daniel NAGY	HUN	Zengő Motorsport	1:41.758	1:40.567	1:40.567	0.851 0.232
4	25 Stefano COMINI	CHE	Target Competition	1:40.798	1:40.634	1:40.634	0.918 0.067
5	77 Sergey AFANASYEV	RUS	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	1:41.456	1:40.714	1:40.714	0.998 0.080
6	74 Pepe ORIOLA	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	1:41.502	1:40.719	1:40.719	1.003 0.005
7	33 Andrea BELICCHI	ITA	Target Competition	1:41.064	1:40.755	1:40.755	1.039 0.036
8	88 Jordi GENÉ	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	1:41.204	1:40.974	1:40.974	1.258 0.219
9	8 Mikhail GRACHEV	RUS	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	1:41.202	1:40.988	1:40.988	1.272 0.014
10	42 Pol ROSELL	ESP	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	1:41.220	1:41.097	1:41.097	1.381 0.109
11	20 Igor SKUZ	UKR	West Coast Racing	1:41.543	1:41.322	1:41.322	1.606 0.225
12	7 Lorenzo VEGLIA	ITA	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	1:41.684	1:41.532	1:41.532	1.816 0.210
13	41 Michela CERRUTI	ITA	Target Competition	1:42.881		1:42.881	3.165 1.349
14	40 Gabriele MAROTTA	MON	Target Competition	1:44.942		1:44.942	5.226 2.061

Not classified:

72	Diego ROMANINI	ITA	Proteam Racing	1:51.842		1:51.842	12.126 6.900
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Stewards:

Timekeeper: