

21 November 2015

Rounds 21 & 22 – Suncity Group Macau Guia Race – 19/22 November 2015

QUALIFYING REPORT

Huff and Gleason put Honda cars on front row

It was an early morning call for everybody at Macau for an exciting and relatively incident-free qualifying session, which had a clear master: Rob Huff. The British star confirmed his 'Macau master' status by topping the session and clinching the pole with an astonishing lap of 2.31.522.

Sharing the first row with Huff will be his protégé and teammate at WestCoast Racing Kevin Gleason, who made an impressive debut on the Guia circuit. Title contenders are right behind in the grid, in a somehow unexpected order: despite being a Macau rookie, Stefano Comini managed to beat Jordi Gené and Pepe Oriola for P3. The Swiss also extended his lead in the championship on Oriola to 4 points. Gianni Morbidelli completed the top 6 despite a spin in Q2 that prompted a red flag. Also impressive, Jordi Oriola (on one of the Target Competition SEAT cars) took 7th, ahead of Afanasyev, Belicchi and Rodolfo Ávila, the best of the TCR Asia drivers. Completed the top 12 Lorenzo Veglia, on the sole VW Golf making it to Q2, and Francisco Mora.

27 cars took part in the qualifying session; after the withdrawals of Rafaël Galiana's SEAT and Alain Menu's Subaru, the field missed Dan Wells' Opel that suffered from water pressure problems in yesterday's free practice.

The first of the two ten-lap races starts Sunday at 10.05 (03.05 CET), followed by the second race at 11.20 (04.20 CET). They will be both streamed live on the internet.

Qualifying 1: Gleason beats Huff

For the first time so far in the event Rob Huff was not the fastest of the field. Hiw WestCoast Racing teammate and protégé Kevin Gleason was able to beat him in the first leg of the Qualifying session.

Gené was the first one to top the time sheet with a lap of 2:37.342 that was soon improved by Pepe Oriola's 2:35.478. A few minutes afterwards Huff set a new fastest lap of 2:34.977. Eventually Gleason beat his teammate clocking a lap of 2:34.536 that was not to be beaten.

The session was disrupted once by the red flag when Sunny Wong's Honda spun and was hit by Frank Yu's SEAT. When qualifying resumed for the final seven minutes there were no improvements.



Other incidents involved Samson Chan and Johnson Huang (both spun) and Francisco Mora who hit a wall. Nash missed the session as his Ford stopped on the track on his first lap out of the pits with suspected transmission problems.

The following drivers advanced to Q2: Gleason, Huff, J. Oriola, P. Oriola, Comini, Morbidelli, Afanasyev, Gené, Belicchi, Ávila, Mora and Veglia.

Qualifying 2: Huff annihilated the rest of the field

With a stunning lap of 2:32.172 Rob Huff annihilated the rest of the field and won pole position, inflicting a gap of 1.6 seconds to Gleason (2:33.153).

Comini clocked a lap of 2:33.498 that placed him third and was worth three precious points for the championship, with Pepe Oriola finishing fifth (2:33.619) and collecting only one point. Gené qualified in fourth with a time of 2:33.528 and Morbidelli in sixth (2:34.665).

This leg too was disrupted by the red flag, when Morbidelli spun and blocked the track.

SEE RESULTS AT THE END OF THE RELEASE

What the drivers had to say after the Qualifying

Rob Huff, pole position: *"We did a good job together with WestCoast and JAS, I am very pleased of working with such professional people. Everything went well, it's not easy to jump into a new championship at the last race, not knowing the car and the team, but progress has been really good throughout the sessions. Tomorrow is a different story: to start from the pole is clearly an advantage, but I haven't had much opportunity to test starting procedures with the Honda or to check how much tyres get warm in an out lap, so there are a number of no certainties despite the pole."*

Kevin Gleason, second: *"I'm very happy to be on the front row for my first time in Macau, the track is really more difficult than I could anticipate. The car is strong and we did a great job, so I am confident for tomorrow."*

Stefano Comini, third: *"I am very happy of my qualifying and of being ahead of Pepe (Oriola), after having been behind him in free practice and Q1. I am progressing well in getting acquainted with the track and start feeling confident to take some risks, as I did in my fast lap. Macau is like dating a nice girl, you need some time to know each other well before things start working really well. I'm still far away from Huff, who has been married to Macau for a while now... Tomorrow, he can go and win, I'll be focusing my race on Pepe anyway..."*



Jordi Gené, fourth: *"Things went ok, I took it as easy as you can take in Macau, knowing that I had to be in the first two rows to still keep a little chance for the title. Things are still open and in two races at Macau, much can happen, in either direction. If Macau is a woman, as Stefano put it, you have always to keep in mind that if you upset her, the divorce can be painful..."*

Pepe Oriola, fifth: *"It has been a difficult session, with two red flags and crashed cars on the track, but I was able improve my lap times. However, I have been a bit slower than Gené and Comini. Tomorrow the two races will be very exciting and I will keep fight for the title until the end."*

Grid penalty drops Frank Yu after yellow flag infringement

Craft-Bamboo's Frank Yu was inflicted a grid penalty for failing to comply with yellow flags during yesterday's second Free Practice session.

The Hong Kong driver will be dropped three positions on the starting grid for tomorrow's Race 1, from 17th to 20th.

The Stewards of the Meeting have also decided to not allow three drivers – Sam Lok, Johnson Huang and Douglas Khoo – to take part in the races, as their qualifying times were well above the qualification maxima limit (107% of the fastest time).




Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T
Qualifying 1 & 2 - Official Combined Classification

BULLETIN 091

POS	NO	DRIVER	NAT	VEHICLE	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2
1	12	Robert Huff	GBR	HondaCivic TCR	2:34.977	2:31.522
2	24	Kevin Gleason	USA	HondaCivic TCR	2:34.536	2:33.153
3	25	Stefano Comini	SUI	SEATLeón	2:35.535	2:33.498
4	88	Jordi Gené	ESP	SEATLeón	2:35.873	2:33.528
5	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	SEATLeón	2:35.478	2:33.619
6	10	Gianni Morbidelli	ITA	HondaCivic TCR	2:35.579	2:34.665
8	77	Sergey Afanasyev	RUS	SEATLeón	2:35.743	2:35.207
7	21	Jordi Oriola	ESP	SEATLeón	2:35.415	2:35.207
9	33	Andrea Belicchi	ITA	SEATLeón	2:36.582	2:35.625
10	87	Rodolfo Avila	MAC	SEATLeón	2:37.176	2:36.702
11	7	Lorenzo Veglia	ITA	VolkswagenGolf TCR	2:37.617	2:36.726
12	50	Francisco Mora	POR	SEATLeón	2:37.370	2:38.597
13	29	Henry Ho	MAC	HondaCivic TCR	2:39.456	
14	8	Mikhail Grachev	RUS	VolkswagenGolf TCR	2:40.103	
15	28	Sunny Wong	HKG	HondaCivic TCR	2:40.745	
16	14	Josh Files	GBR	OpelAstra OPC	2:43.105	
17	99	Frank Yu	HKG	SEATLeón	2:43.545	
18	27	Robb Holland	USA	SEATLeón	2:44.662	
19	49	Guillaume Cunningham	FRA	SEATLeón	2:45.863	
20	68	Michael Choi	HKG	HondaCivic TCR	2:46.855	
21	38	Kenneth Lau	HKG	HondaCivic TCR	2:46.972	
22	98	Keith Chan	HKG	SEATLeón	2:50.381	
23	56	Samson Chan	HKG	SEATLeón	2:53.443	
24	63	Sam Lok	HKG	SEATLeon	2:56.945	
25	97	Johnson Huang	TPE	SEATLeón	2:57.640	
26	65	Douglas Khoo	MAS	SEATLeón	3:05.583	
27	73	James Nash	GBR	FordFocus ST TCR		

Circuito da Guia, Macau
Circuit Length = 6.120 Km - 3.8028 miles

Steward	Steward:	Steward	Posted at:	 TAGHeuer <small>SWISS AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1860</small> www.tagheuer.com
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