

22 November 2015

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

Comini is crowned the first champion of TCR International Series

Stefano Comini made it! The Swiss driver was crowned the first TCR International Series champion, after putting on an impressive performance throughout the entire weekend at Macau.

He had arrived at the Guia circuit with only two points of advantage over Pepe Oriola, but with the great handicap of having never raced on this very special track. After a quick learning process over the two free practice sessions, he took a key psychological advantage over his direct rival in qualifying, beating him and extending his lead in the championship to four points.

Then he managed to stay ahead of the Spaniard in both races. The duel between the two was particularly fierce in Race 2 and ended with the Craft-Bamboo Lukoil driver retiring with a pierced radiator following the many contacts. Comini rounded things with a superb maiden win at Macau, his sixth of the season, ahead of team mate Andrea Belicchi, a 1-2 that allowed Target Competition to win the Teams' title as well, overturning the situation in the last race.

Rob Huff also made history, by taking pole position and winning Race 1 – his personal eighth victory on the Guia circuit. That was exactly what the British star had come for, enjoying greatly his first TCR experience in the WestCoast Honda Civic. Jordi Gené and Comini completed the Race 1 podium, with Mikhail Grachev of Liqui Moly Team Engstler taking third in Race 2, his second podium of the season.

Macau's tradition was respected, as both races saw a spectacular first lap crash and were both red-flagged.

Race 1 – Rob Huff rules again in Macau

As expected, Rob Huff dominated Race 1 to take his 8th success at Guia Circuit. Driving the WestCoast Racing Honda, the Brit still had a sweating kick-off, as his start from pole position was not great and he only managed to emerge ahead of Jordi Gené and Stefano Comini with a late braking at the Lisboa corner. From there on, Huff had a much quieter morning, with the three title contenders (Gené, Comini and Pepe Oriola) minding their crown affair.

















The three ran almost bumper-to-bumper for the entire race but positions did not change and the only serious attack from Oriola in the last lap went fruitless. This allowed Comini to exted his lead to 7 points ahead of Race 2, with Gené definitely out of contention. Jordi Oriola took an excellent fifth, after passing the Honda cars of Gianni Morbidelli and Kevin Gleason. Andrea Belicchi was eighth ahead of the VW Golf of Lorenzo Veglia, with Sergey Afanasyev taking the last point.

Rodolfo Ávila finished in 12th place and won the TCR Asia race for Asia Racing Team.

The race was marked by a big accident in the middle of the group during the first lap that involved Francisco Mora, Kenneth Lau and Frank Yu, prompting a red flag and a 3-lap safety-car period. Mora was sent to the hospital for medical checks.

Key moments

Start – Comini and Gené sprint from row 2 and sandwich Huff; the three go abreast all through the straight, with Huff retaking the advantage at the Mandarin bend ahead of Gené, Comini, P. Oriola, Morbidelli and Gleason. It's drama behind them: Mora hits the wall and spins, Yu brakes in avoidance, Lau hit him and crashes into Mora's car. The race is red-flagged while Mora is brought to hospital for checks.

Lap 1 – The safety car is deployed; Ho pits with electrical gremlins.

Lap 4 – The race restarts, with Huff leading from Gené, Comini, P. Oriola, Morbidelli and Gleason.

Lap 5 – Morbidelli defends fifth place from Gleason, J. Oriola, Afanasyev and Belicchi.

Lap 6 – Huff's lead is now 2 seconds over the trio Gené, Comini, P. Oriola; Nash, who was 15th, pits with engine overheating; Jordi Oriola passes Gleason and Morbidelli, climbing to fifth.

Lap 8 – The attention shifts to the three men fighting for the title, as they are closest as ever; Veglia and Grachev pass Afanasyen for 9th and 10th.

Lap 10 – P. Oriola makes an attempt to pass Comini at Lisboa, but at no avail; there is some bumping at Melco hairpin, but nothing changes; Comini is third behind Huff and Gené and ahead of P. Oriola; Afanasyev passes Grachev for 10th.

Race 2 – Comini survives pile up to win race and title!

Stefano Comini rounded a perfect Macau weekend by securing the title and taking his maiden win at the Guia circuit. The Swiss racer showed temper and coolness by resisting all the attacks of Pepe Oriola, which included a number of bumps and contacts.





The Spaniard's efforts not only resulted vane, but eventually took a toll on his Craft-Bamboo Lukoil SEAT, which stopped along the track three laps from the end.

The race started in the most spectacular and dramatic way, as the two men on the front row, Rob Huff and Jordi Gené, collided prompting a massive pile-up that left eleven cars out of contention. Only nine made it to the restart, which clearly had the Comini-Oriola duel as the main attraction, and what an attraction it was! Fierce and manly, the duel stayed correct, but nothing could bend Comini's determination. It was a sad race also for the younger of the Oriola brothers, Jordi, who was bound to a podium finish but had to retire two laps from the end, which gave Mikhail Grachev (Liqui Moly Team Engstler VW Golf) his second podium of the season. Morbidelli (slowed by a drive-through), Ávila (who scored his second victory of the day in TCR Asia), Holland and K. Chan were the other race finishers.

Key moments

Grid – Nash doesn't show up after his Ford suffered from engine problems in Race 1.

Start – Gené and Huff take a good start, but they make contact and hit the wall initiating a massive accident; Veglia crashes hard in to the wall and a pile-up ensues; the race is stopped and eventually no less than 11 cars suffer from damage beyond repairs: Huff, Gené, Veglia, Gleason, Files, Wong, Choi, Cunnington, S. Chan, Ho and Afanasyev.

Lap 2 – At the rolling restart behind the safety car, Comini keeps the advantage, with P. Oriola trying an unsuccessful move on the outside at the Lisboa braking; Morbidelli is given a drive through for a grid infringement.

Lap 3 – Morbidelli stops to serve the sanction; Comini leads from Pepe and Jordi Oriola, Belicchi, Grachev, Avila, K. Chan and Holland.

Lap 4 – P. Oriola keeps the pressure, touching Comini's bumper on a couple of occasions.

Lap 5 – Comini leads from the Oriola brothers, the three being very close; the Swiss pulls slightly away in the straights, but seems a little bit slower in the twisty section.

Lap 6 – Again, P. Oriola tries a move at Lisboa on the outside line and this time there is a clear contact; J. Oriola and Belicchi are catching the leading duo.

Lap 7 – Comini pulls slightly away; Morbidelli passes Ávila for 6th.

Lap 8 – There is more bumping at the Lisboa braking, but this time P. Oriola's SEAT gets the worst of it and stops with a pierced radiator; Belicchi takes second from J. Oriola.

Lap 9 – The younger Oriola is given a drive through for trespassing the white line at pit exit, which gives third to Grachev.

Lap 10 – The race ends with Comini finishing the job ahead of teammate Belicchi.





What the race winners had to say

Stefano Comini, winner of Race 2 and TCR champion: "I have no words, it's a very special moment for me: winning at Macau and clinching the first TCR title... What can I say? Unbelievable... Both races were very tough. In Race 1, I was caught in a sandwich between the two Bamboo cars, with Gené holding me, and Pepe Oriola putting the pressure. It wasn't that easy. In Race 2, Pepe kept on with the pressure, I think he got a little bit stressed with the point situation, but I always stayed in front of him. I knew that second in Race 2 was enough for me to claim the title, but I really wanted to win at Macau and when I saw that Huff was out of the race at the start, I really though I should have a go..."

Rob Huff, winner of Race 1: "First of all, my congratulations go to Stefano for winning the championship, he is a worthy first TCR Champion. For me a day of mixed feelings, but I came here seeking for an eighth win at Macau and got it. Start of Race 1 was touchy, with three cars abreast down to the Lisboa. I had a title contender at each side, and didn't want to interfere, but also being in the middle, I was in the best position for the first braking. After that, things got easier. In Race 2, again the start was quite touchy, but this time it looked there wasn't enough space for two, and everything went wrong. That's Macau..."

SEE RESULTS AND POINT HERE BELOW







Prisipità Andrew Macau Grand Prix Macau Grand Prix

Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T Race 1 - Official Classification

TIMING BULLETIN 153

POS	NO	DRIVER / TEAM	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	DIFF	KM/H	BEST	ON
1	12	Robert Huff West Coast Racing	GBR	Honda Civic TCR	32:52.232	10	10 laps		142.94	2:34.136	7
2	88	Jordi Gené Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	ESP	SEAT León	33:00.064	10	7.832	7.832	142.65	2:34.449	6
3	25	Stefano Comini Target Competition	SUI	SEAT León	33:01.282	10	9.050	1.218	142.26	2:34.875	6
4	74	Pepe Oriola Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	ESP	SEAT León	33:02.691	10	10.459	1.409	142.16	2:34.985	7
5	21	Jordi Oriola Target Competition	ESP	SEAT León	33:05.593	10	13.361	2.902	142.05	2:35.104	8
6	10	Gianni Morbidelli West Coast Racing	ITA	Honda Civic TCR	33:08.500	10	16.268	2.907	141.39	2:35.820	9
7	24	Kevin Gleason West Coast Racing	USA	Honda Civic TCR	33:09.240	10	17.008	0.740	142.04	2:35.112	10
8	33	Andrea Belicchi Target Competition	ITA	SEAT León	33:10.461	10	18.229	1.221	141.67	2:35.519	9
9	7	Lorenzo Veglia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	ITA	Volkswagen Golf TCR	33:18.859	10	26.627	8.398	141.13	2:36.116	5
10	77	Sergey Afanasyev Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	RUS	SEAT León	33:26.824	10	34.592	7.965	141.58	2:35.612	10
11	8	Mikhail Grachev Liqui Moly Team Engstler	RUS	Volkswagen Golf TCR	33:28.999	10	36.767	2.175	140.03	2:37.334	9
12	87	Rodolfo Avila Asia Racing Team	MAC	SEAT León	33:40.248	10	48.016	11.249	138.49	2:39.092	8
13	14	Josh Files Campos Racing	GBR	Opel Astra OPC	33:45.877	10	53.645	5.629	138.53	2:39.044	6
14	27	Robb Holland Roadstar Racing Team	USA	SEAT León	33:53.652	10	1:01.420	7.775	137.21	2:40.572	10
15	28	Sunny Wong West Coast Racing	HKG	Honda Civic TCR	34:16.940	10	1:24.708	23.288	136.08	2:41.910	9
16	68	Michael Choi Prince Racing Hong Kong	HKG	Honda Civic TCR	34:31.632	10	1:39.400	14.692	133.51	2:45.017	6
17	49	Guillaume Cunnington Liqui Moly Team Engstler	FRA	SEAT León	35:02.074	10	2:09.842	30.442	131.92	2:47.015	8
18	98	Keith Chan Target Competition	HKG	SEAT León	35:09.807	10	2:17.575	7.733	130.57	2:48.739	8
19	56	Samson Chan Roadstar Racing Team	HKG	SEAT León	35:21.215	10	2:28.983	11.408	128.46	2:51.512	9
DNC	73	James Nash Proteam Racing	GBR	Ford Focus ST TCR	20:56.884	5	5 laps	1.760	129.82	2:49.713	4
DNC	29	Henry Ho PAS Macau Racing Team	MAC	Honda Civic TCR	35:22.541	3	3 laps	20:23.997	136.59	2:41.306	3
DNC	50	Francisco Mora Target Competition	POR	SEAT León		0					0
DNC	99	Frank Yu Craft-Bamboo Racing	HKG	SEAT León		0					0
DNC	38	Kenneth Lau Prince Racing Hong Kong	HKG	Honda Civic TCR		0					0

12 Robert Huff GBR Honda The Secretary of the 234-136ng 7 142.94 km/h 88.82 mph
Published

Doc. no. 308

Date: >2 / i! / 2015

Hour: ib H 34

Signature: 3

Start: 10:05:26 - End: 10:38:15
Weather/Track: Sun 26C / Dry 26C
Circuito da Guia, Macau
Circuit Length = 6.120 Km - 3.8028 miles

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Prince Primio de Macau Macau Grand Prix

Suncity Group Macau Guia Race 2.0T Race 2 - Official Classification

TIMING BULLETIN 154

POS	NO	DRIVER / TEAM	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	DIFF	KM/H	BEST	ON
1	25	Stefano Comini Target Competition	SUI	SEAT León	40:07.354	10	10 laps		142.07	2:35.074	7
2	33	Andrea Belicchi Target Competition	ITA	SEAT León	40:09.087	10	1.733	1.733	142.22	2:34.917	5
3	8	Mikhail Grachev Liqui Moly Team Engstler	RUS	Volkswagen Golf TCR	40:33.903	10	26.549	24.816	139.92	2:37.459	6
4	10	Gianni Morbidelli West Coast Racing	ITA	Honda Civic TCR	40:40.031	10	32.677	6.128	140.90	2:36.361	7
5	87	Rodolfo Avila Asia Racing Team	MAC	SEAT León	41:03.244	10	55.890	23.213	137.31	2:40.453	9
6	27	Robb Holland Roadstar Racing Team	USA	SEAT León	41:04.019	10	56.665	0.775	138.32	2:39.283	10
7	98	Keith Chan Target Competition	HKG	SEAT León	42:24.564	10	2:17.210	1:20.545	129.27	2:50.440	6
8	21	Jordi Oriola Target Competition	ESP	SEAT León	35:24.946	8	8 laps		142.47	2:34.639	7
9	74	Pepe Oriola Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	ESP	SEAT León	32:19.539	7	7 laps		142.52	2:34.587	7
DNC	77	Sergey Afanasyev Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	RUS	SEAT León	4:30.347	1	1 lap	1:02.694	0.00		0
DNC	12	Robert Huff West Coast Racing	GBR	Honda Civic TCR		0					0
DNC	88	Jordi Gené Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	ESP	SEAT León		0					0
DNC	24	Kevin Gleason West Coast Racing	USA	Honda Civic TCR		0					0
DNC	7	Lorenzo Veglia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	ITA	Volkswagen Golf TCR		0					0
DNC	14	Josh Files Campos Racing	GBR	Opel Astra OPC		0					0
DNC	28	Sunny Wong West Coast Racing	HKG	Honda Civic TCR		0					0
DNC	68	Michael Choi Prince Racing Hong Kong	HKG	Honda Civic TCR		0					0
DNC	49	Guillaume Cunnington Liqui Moly Team Engstler	FRA	SEAT León		0					0
DNC	56	Samson Chan Roadstar Racing Team	HKG	SEAT León		0					0
DNC	29	Henry Ho PAS Macau Racing Team	MAC	Honda Civic TCR		0					0
				— FASTEST L	_AP .						
	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	SEAT	2:34.587	7	142	.52 km/h	8	8.56 mph	

Car 21 - Penalty + 20 Seconds - Crossing Pit Exit Line

The Secretary of the Meeting Published

Date: 22 / 11 / 2

Weather/Track: Sun 27C / Dry 27C
Circuito da Guia, Macau

Circuit Length = 6.120 Km - 3.8028 miles

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2015 TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES - DRIVERS' CLASSIFICATION 12 April 10 May 24 May 31 May RUSSIA 21 June Sepang CHINA ITALY Sochi TOTAL driver pos Q Q Sefano Comini (SUI) Pepe Oriola (ESP) Jordi Gené (ESP) Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) Kevin Gleason (USA) Andrea Belicchi (ITA) n n Sergey Afanasyev (RUS) Michel Nykjær (DEN) Mikhail Grachev (RUS) Lorenzo Veglia (ITA) René Münnich (GER) Loris Hezemans (NED) Nicki Thiim (DEN) Rob Huff (GBR) Pol Rosell (ESP) Fernando Monje (ESP) -_ _ _ _ _ _ Tomas Engström (SWE) Franz Engstler (GER) José Monroy (POR) Jordi Oriola (ESP) Kelvin Van der Linde (RSA) Rodolfo Ávila (MAC) lgor Skuz (UKR) Zsolt Szabó (HUN) Bas Schouten (NED) David Cebrián (ESP) n Robb Holland (USA) Oscar Nogués (ESP) Keith Chan (HKG) Francisco Mora (POR) Michela Cerruti (ITA) Tin Sritrai (THA) Norbert Tóth (HUN) Ferenc Ficza (HUN) Antonio D'Amico (ITA) Dániel Nagy (HUN) Frank Yu (HKG) n n n n Aleksey Dudukalo (RUS) Tengyi Jiang (CHN) Munkong Sathienthirakul (THA) Tom Boardman (GBR) Ildar Rakhmatullin (RUS) Gabriele Marotta (MON) -

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Markus Östreich (GER)

Rafaël Galiana (FRA)



2015 TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES - TEAMS' CLASSIFICATION

2013 TCK INTERNATIONAL SERIES -												1 -	.∕≺I4I	J (133	IFIC	·~ ı	IOIN																
pos	driver	Sepang	MALAYSIA	29 March	Shanghai Jiading	CHINA	12 April	Valencia	SPAIN	3 May	Portimão	PORTUGAL	10 May	Monza	ITALY	24 May	Salzburgring	AUSTRIA	31 May	Sochi	RUSSIA	21 June	Red Bull Ring	AUSTRIA	12 July	Marina Bay	SINGAPORE	20 September	Buriram	THAILAND	25 October	Macau	MACAU	22 November	TOTAL
		Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	ď	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	
1	Target Competition	7	35	22	0	27	43	7	25	43	0	13	26	5	15	22	3	33	35	4	27	33	2	43	14	5	22	22	0	22	43	3	25	43	669
2	Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	0	33	43	2	12	16	7	43	12	7	20	27	5	30	18	3	20	30	8	43	30	1	27	33	3	22	40	6	43	27	3	30	6	650
3	WestCoast Racing	6	20	23	9	43	25	0	10	27	1	10	20	5	33	33	9	35	23	0	14	14	9	14	12	7	40	22	8	19	0	9	33	12	545
4	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	2	4	8	3	12	14	1	16	6	7	40	8	0	6	6	0	6	8	3	14	21	0	14	35	0	14	14	1	14	18	0	10	15	320
5	Campos Racing	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	10	15	0	2	0	-	-	-	-	-	,	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	44
6	Zengö Motorsport	0	6	4	1	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	6	0	1	0	-	-	-	3	0	0	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
7	Veloso Motorsport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	12	14	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
8	Asia Racing Team	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-			-	-	-	-	- 1		-	-	- 1	0	3	10	0	2	10	25
9	Bas Koeten Racing	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	4	-	-	-	-	- 1		0	4	4	- 1	-	- 1	-	- 1		-	-	- 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
10	Roadstar Racing Team	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	8	11
11	JSB Compétition	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
12	Prince Racing Hong Kong	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
13	B.D. Racing Motorsport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
14	Proteam Racing	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	1