

**18 March 2016**

## **Oriola, Afanasyev, Nash form Craft-Bamboo Lukoil's trio**

Craft-Bamboo Racing will continue their partnership with SEAT Sport and Lukoil in the TCR International Series. The team will field three León TCR cars once again, with James Nash joining Pepe Oriola and Sergey Afanasyev who have been confirmed after a brilliant 2015 season.

Richard Coleman, CEO of Craft-Bamboo Racing stated: *"Over the winter we worked hard to retain our partners and carry this consistency into the second TCR season; we feel very confident that we have the full package to deliver a championship winning effort."*

Evgeny Malinovskiy, Head of Lukoil Racing added: *"With the long history of mutual success that Lukoil and SEAT Sport have in motorsport I trust that, together with Craft-Bamboo Racing, we can be at the top in this championship."*

Pepe Oriola: *"I am so happy to stay with Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil and SEAT, as last year we worked so well together and fought for the championship right up until the last lap. I want to thank Lukoil and SEAT Sport for making this all possible and I hope to grab the Drivers' championship this year."*

Sergey Afanasyev: *"We had a lot of great moments last year and my target is to get even more of them this year! There is always only one target – to be first. But it is always a matter of experience, and the championship will be much stronger this year. I'm aiming to be in the top three drivers and help the team to win in the Teams' championship."*

James Nash: *"I am really excited to be returning to touring cars with a team with whom I've had so much success. It's going to be a big challenge, but one I am glad to be attempting. Pre-season testing has been limited but stepping into a championship-winning car is always a good place to start!"*

## **WestCoast adds Pellinen to Morbidelli and Gleason**

WestCoast Racing returns to the TCR International Series with a trio of Honda Civic TCR cars and a bolstered driver line-up made up of Gianni Morbidelli, Aku Pellinen and Kevin Gleason.

Morbidelli and Gleason remain under the team's umbrella for a second shot at the TCR International title; being joined by former Trofeo Abarth 500 Europe champion, Pellinen from Finland.

*"It's a great pleasure to be back in the WestCoast Racing team. I feel like at home here," said Morbidelli. "We have one goal and that is to win. We now have a more complete package with the addition of Aku and I have no doubt that he, Kevin and me will all be giving the maximum to be on top in what I'm sure will be another enjoyable year for us all."*

Pellinen said: *"This is quite a big step in my career and my first experience of racing outside of Europe, but it's a good opportunity in a series that is growing at a surprisingly fast rate. It's a real opportunity to spread my wings and, while I've only completed a handful of laps in the Honda Civic TCR, I'm confident it will suit me well."*

Gleason added: *"I'm thrilled to be back with WestCoast Racing, as this is the first time in my career that I've remained with a team for more than one year. We grew really close while travelling the world in 2015 so the team is like my motorsport family. To stay with them, to know the TCR International Series and many of the circuits should put me in a strong position this year."*

Team Manager, James Nixon, commented: *"It feels great to welcome back both Gianni and Kevin. Their commitment is immense as they work tirelessly on improving, and they grew closer as teammates in 2015, working to develop the Honda Civic with their engineers. All of that hard work will hopefully show in this year's results. We are also pleased to add Aku Pellinen; I believe he will be a top contender for the title come the end of the season. With this line-up, I feel we are now in a position to take on the fight for the titles."*

## **Positive test for the Romeo Ferraris Giulietta TCR**

The Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR built by Romeo Ferraris engineering company took part in the Valencia test days with Michela Cerruti at the wheel. The Italian car completed a large number of laps with no reported technical issues.

Team principal Mario Ferraris commented: *"We can be satisfied. On both days the car proved to be reliable and we were able to focus on the set up and balance. Our work resulted in very positive response in terms of performance. We still have more work to do, but the potential looks good."*

Michela Cerruti echoed: *"This was our first test on a long track and we were pleased to see that everything worked. The Giulietta has a very good base to work from, but clearly there is room for improvement, especially with regard to its behaviour in cornering. We would have liked to have had more time for testing and development, but that is true for everybody! Still, it's good to see that we did not have any major hiccups and we are confident for the kick-off in Bahrain."*

## **FRD Motorsports to build new Ford Focus TCR**

The FRD Motorsports Team is currently working to completely rebuild the Ford Focus TCR cars.

*"Following the technical issues we experienced last year after taking over the programme which had been started by another engineering company, we have decided to start over from scratch. We re-designed the car and will develop it, which prevented us from taking part in the Balance of Performance test at Valencia,"* explained Team Principal Kenneth Ma.

The technical development is currently under way in FRD's workshop in Colorado, USA. The team plans to build four cars to begin with; they will be fitted with Xtrac racing gearboxes and 2.0-litre turbocharged engines developed by Ford Performance in Dearborn, Michigan.

*"We will enter two cars for the full season in the TCR International Series, however, because we expect to begin testing in April, our target is to join the series in Monza at the earliest,"* said Brian Ma, Vice President of Technical Operations. The team will announce the names of the drivers in due course.

## **Homola and Borković happy with Valencia test**

The B3 Racing Team Hungary took part in the Valencia test days with its three SEAT León cars driven by Mat'ó Homola, Attila Tassi and Dušan Borković.

Homola was happy with the work they did in Spain: *"Compared to 2015 the car is now fitted with a sequential racing gearbox, new aerodynamics kit, cooling system, suspension and brakes. We focused mainly on suspension and vehicle balance setting. The new gearbox is a lot lighter and this changed the vehicle weight distribution, so we need to adjust the setting accordingly. We have tested several brake pad compounds and are still looking for the best solution that can make the car faster and easier to drive."*



Homola's race engineer Manuel Huguet added. *"We have gathered a lot of data, were able to test several suspension settings and practised starts. Mat'o is a passionate driver and did a great job. We are still facing some small teething issues, but nothing serious."*

Borković was also satisfied with the test: *"I expected the SEAT to be upgraded and I was not disappointed. I have made an instant connection with my new race engineer, we worked on quite a lot of things until the rain fell on Monday afternoon. The championship will be extremely competitive and I am looking forward to this great challenge."*

## **Jordi Oriola to drive a Target Competition Opel Astra**

Jordi Oriola is facing the biggest challenge in his racing career. The 19-year old Spaniard has committed to the full season of the TCR International Series at the wheel of an Opel Astra TCR run by Target Competition.

*"This has always been my dream, racing in a world championship where young drivers like me may have a future in touring cars. I am looking forward to showing my potential. The championship will visit some famous and demanding racetracks and will be part of three Formula One events. On top of this, I will be driving the Opel Astra, which I had the opportunity to test in Valencia where I had a very positive feeling,"* said Oriola who ended the 2015 season with a brilliant fifth place in the Macau Guia Race for Target Competition.

*"I wish to thank Opel Motorsport and all my sponsors for giving me the chance to compete in the whole TCR International Series. There are no doubts about my will to do my best from the beginning of the season with the aim to fight for the top five positions in the championship."*

## **Leopard Racing continued testing in France**

After a first test at Valencia, Leopard Racing continued developing and setting up its two Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR cars at Magny-Cours.

In good weather conditions, but with cold temperatures, the Stefano Comini and Jean-Karl Vernay could not push the tyres to the limit, although they were able to complete several laps using two different configurations.

Comini said: *"We worked a lot throughout the day. There were some teething problems, but we were still able to learn more about the car. Everything we tried went in the right direction and we hope that this information will be useful for the first event."*

Vernay added: *"Weather conditions were not ideal and we struggled to heat the tyres up. In any case it was a good test that allowed us to continue improving our knowledge of the car. We gathered data that will be important for the upcoming races."*