

19 April 2016

Rounds 3 & 4 – Estoril, Portugal – 23 / 24 April 2016

PREVIEW

The most famous Portuguese racetrack hosts the second event

Three weeks after the season kicked off in Bahrain, the TCR International Series is heading to Portugal for rounds three and four.

The event will take place at Circuito Estoril, arguably the most famous Portuguese racetrack that was built in 1970 and hosted the Formula One Grand Prix between 1984 and 1996.

After adapting its format to the F1 timetable in Bahrain, the International Series reverts to its standard scheme with both races on Sunday, each over a distance of 60 kilometres.

The drivers will hit the track first on Friday afternoon, for a 30-minute Free Practice session; the second Practice will be run on Saturday morning, followed in the afternoon by the Qualifying, split in Q1 (20 minutes) and Q2 (10 minutes, for the twelve fastest in Q1).

TCR in Estoril – the event at a glance

Lap distance: 4.18 km

Race distance: 15 laps

Start: standing

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

Timetable:	Friday, 17:10/17:40	Free Practice 1
	Saturday, 10:15/10:45	Free Practice 2
	Saturday, 16:40/17:15	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Sunday, 11:25	Race 1
	Sunday, 17:05	Race 2

all times: GMT +1

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The focus is on testing for the Opel Astra TCR

Following its first appearance in the TCR International Series at the Bahrain International Circuit, the new Opel Astra TCR will continue its technical development within the next few months and will come back to competition after finalizing its test programme.

Jörg Schrott, Opel Motorsport Director, stated: *"The event in Bahrain, where the Astra TCR competed as part of our test and development programme, provided us with some valuable results. The race weekend under special climatic conditions proved that the development of the Astra TCR is not finalized yet, so we will now thoroughly continue the test and development programme. As soon as it is completed, we will start the delivery of the Astra TCR to our customers."*

TCR promoter Marcello Lotti added: *"The Astra TCR it is one of the most beautiful and eagerly-awaited cars in the field, but Opel Motorsport needs to focus on testing in order to finalize its technical development. We are well aware that when a new racing car is built to comply with a brand new set of rules like TCR's – that is only in its second season – it takes some times before this phase is completed. We have seen this happening with other brands that have recently joined the series. We hope Opel will complete the development soon and look forward to seeing the three Astra TCR cars run by Target Competition join the TCR International Series for good."*

The Volkswagen Golf Gti is given a 30-kilo weight break

The TCR International Series technical department has revised the Balance of Performance on the basis of the TCR International Series results in Bahrain.

For the Portuguese event, the Honda Civic TCR and SEAT León TCR remains the heaviest cars and keep on carrying 40 extra kilos that bring their running weight from 1285 to 1325 kilos, including the driver.

The Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR cars were given a 30-kilo weight break and will now run at the minimum weight of 1285 kilos as per the Technical Regulations.

A weight reduction will be also applied to the Opel Astra TCR and the Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR cars; they will run at 1265 kilos, just like the Subaru STi TCR.

The weight of the SEAT León Cup Racer cars remains unchanged at 1250 kg.

The success ballast is applied on top of these weights. Following the Bahrain results, in Portugal Pepe Oriola, James Nash and Dušan Borković will carry 30, 20 and 10 extra kilos respectively.

Baporo Motorsport with Hezemans and Mora

SEAT specialist Baporo Motorsport will make its first appearance in the TCR International Series at Estoril, running two León cars for teenagers Loris Hezemans and Francisco Mora.

Both drivers have already tasted TCR on a few occasions last year. Hezemans, 18-year-old from the Netherlands, took part in the events of Singapore and Buriram, claiming a brilliant second position in Thailand. As for the 19-year-old Portuguese Mora, he had joined in Algarve and Macau; his best result was eighth in the second race at Portimão.

The Spanish team has entered one León updated to 2016 TCR specifications with sequential gearbox for Hezemans and one León Cup Racer with DSG gearbox for Mora.

"Our plan is to be in the TCR international series for the remainder of the season. I am very happy to be back in the same car that last year gave me my first TCR podium and also I'm pleased to compete yet again in the TCR international series. My goal for Estoril will be to qualify within the top-three and reach the podium in at least one of the races," said Hezemans.

Mora added: *"This is an important challenge for me, as the TCR International Series is a kind of world championship: top-level competition with the some of the best touring car drivers and you have to learn everything quickly. It is not going to be easy for me, as I will drive the car for the first time after Macau. But I'm very motivated, because it will serve me as a training in view of my participation in the TCR Portugal with the same car."*

Cooperation between Top Run and Subaru gains force

Top Run Motorsport's programme with the Subaru STi TCR received an important boost from Team Manager Renato Russo's recent visit to the headquarter of Fuji Heavy Industries in Japan.

"We were invited by Makoto Shimamura, managing director of all Subaru motorsports activities and I met him and Yosuke Takahashi who is in charge to follow the TCR programme," explained Russo who added. *"Shimamura-san congratulated us for the far-sightedness in committing with the Subaru brand to the TCR International Series that is already creating a growing interest in Japan with teams and fans. As a matter of fact, this meeting was prompted following different enquiries about TCR that Subaru STi received from the Japanese media."*

The Italian team continues to develop the Subaru TCi TCR that will be driven by Luca Rangoni in the upcoming Portuguese weekend at Estoril. Top Run Motorsport is working in cooperation with Subaru's STi department and their joint efforts are now aiming to field the final update of the Japanese car in the Italian event of the TCR International Series in May.

Live streaming and timing from Estoril

Both live streaming and timing from Estoril will be available on the websites www.tcr-series.com and www.tcr-series.tv.

The live timing will cover all the sessions and races from Friday afternoon, while both races will be streamed live on Sunday.

Streaming of Race 1 will begin at 11:15 local time (12:15 CET), while Race 2 will be shown from 16:55 local time (17:55 CET).

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#	team	driver	car
1	Leopard Racing	Stefano Comini (SUI)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
2	Leopard Racing	Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
7	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Davit Kajaia (GEO)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
8	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
9	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Attila Tassi (HUN)	SEAT León TCR
10	West Coast Racing	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	Honda Civic TCR
14	West Coast Racing	Aku Pellinen (FIN)	Honda Civic TCR
24	West Coast Racing	Kevin Gleason (USA)	Honda Civic TCR
26	Baporo Motorsport	Francisco Mora (POR)	SEAT León Cup Racer
31	Top Run Motorsport	Luca Rangoni (ITA)	Subaru STi TCR
50	Baporo Motorsport	Loris Hezemans (NED)	SEAT León TCR
54	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	James Nash (GBR)	SEAT León TCR
62	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Dušan Borković (SRB)	SEAT León TCR
70	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Mat'ó Homola (SVK)	SEAT León TCR
74	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	SEAT León TCR
77	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	SEAT León TCR
88	Mulsanne Racing	Michela Cerruti (ITA)	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR