13 September 2016

Rounds 17 & 18 – Singapore – 16 / 18 September 2016
PREVIEW

TCR International Series re-joins Formula 1 in Singapore

Three weeks after racing in Thailand, at Buriram's Chang International Circuit, the TCR International Series will resume this weekend in Singapore as part of the Formula One Singapore Airlines Singapore Grand Prix.

This is the second of three occasions in which the TCR International Series supports F1, after the season opener at Bahrain and before the next round in Sepang, Malaysia.

Last year, on their first appearance at the Marina Bay Street Circuit, competitors in the TCR International Series delivered two thrilling races: on Saturday night, Kevin Gleason and his WestCoast Racing Honda Civic overtook Stefano Comini's SEAT León on the last-but-one lap and claimed a brilliant victory, while Gleason's teammate Gianni Morbidelli beat Pepe Oriola in the fight for third position.

Craft-Bamboo Lukoil's Jordi Gené dominated Sunday's race, leading a SEAT 1-2-3 ahead of Comini and Oriola.

As always, when it joins Formula One, the TCR International Series has to adapt its format to the Grand Prix timetable. As a consequence, the usual two 30-minute Free Practices will be replaced by a single 40-minute session on Friday afternoon.

A 25-minute Qualifying session, split into Q1 (15 minutes) and Q2 (10 minutes, for the twelve fastest in Q1) will take place early on Saturday afternoon and will be followed by the spectacular night race, one of the highlights of the TCR calendar and a juicy prelude to the F1 Qualifying.

The second race will open Sunday's programme in the early afternoon.

TCR in Singapore – the event at a glance

Lap distance: 5.06 km
Race distance: 10 laps
Start: standing
Grids: determined by the Qualifying results (Q1+Q2) with top-10 reversed for Race 2

Timetable:		
	Friday, 15:35/16:15	Free Practice
	Saturday, 14:40/15:05	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Saturday, 19:25	Race 1
	Sunday, 15:00	Race 2
	all times: GMT +8	

Success Ballast for the top three title contenders

The allocation of Success Ballast for the Singapore event will follow precisely the current positions in the Drivers' Championship standings.

James Nash of Craft-Bamboo Lukoil emerged as the best points scorer in the previous event in Thailand; with a second place and a victory he bagged 43 points that propelled him to the top of the classification table. This will also result in 30 kilos of Success Ballast on board his SEAT León.

Nash's teammate Pepe Oriola and Leopard Racing's Stefano Comini were the second and third best scorers in Buriram (with 30 and 26 points respectively) and are currently lying second and third in the standings. Their cars will be laden with 20 (Oriola's) and 10 (Comini's) extra kilos.

With this success ballast added to the BoP, the running weights of the three cars will be 1345 kg for Nash's SEAT, 1335 kg for Oriola's SEAT and 1295 kg for Comini's Volkswagen Golf.

Kissling Motorsport to run an Opel Astra for Jordi Oriola

After a brief maiden appearance in the season's opening event at Bahrain, the Opel Astra TCR will race in the TCR International Series at Singapore.

In the last few months, Opel Motorsport has focused on the car's technical development and the Astra TCR has made good progress as was shown by its participation in the TCR Benelux, TCR Germany and TCR Portugal series where it was competitive and celebrated its first victories at Zolder and again last week in Jerez de la Frontera.

Following those encouraging results, Opel Motorsport has announced it feels ready for the next challenging appearance in the TCR International Series. It will be another important moment to see where the Astra TCR stands in the final stages of its development.

In light of its recent results, the Astra TCR was allocated a Balance of Performance of 20 kg in addition to the minimum weight of 1285 kg.

The car will be entered and run by Kissling Motorsport and driven by Jordi Oriola.

FRD-built Ford Focus TCR is ready to make its debut at Singapore

The Ford Focus TCR built and developed by Hong Kong-based FRD Motorsport is ready to make its maiden appearance in the TCR International Series at Singapore, where it will be driven by Martin Cao Hongwei.

The 23-year old Chinese driver, who won the British Formula 3 International Series title in 2014, raced for FRD at the beginning of his career in the Asian Formula Renault series. He returned to the team this year to drive a Ford Focus in the 2.0T Class of the China Touring Car Championship, in which he is currently second behind his teammate Rainey He, having claimed his maiden victory at Shanghai.

"We are very excited, but at the same time cautiously optimistic about our debut performance. We felt that the demanding nature of the Singapore street circuit would offer us the best chance to gauge our new car against the competition. At the very least, we hope to come out of the event with more knowledge on how we can refine the car before delivering the first cars to our customers over the winter. Our staff have worked tirelessly on this project in the past seven months and I would like to see their hard work rewarded with a respectable result," said Kenneth Ma, President of FRD Motorsports.

When asked to give details of the new car, Brian Ma, FRD motorsports Vice president of Technical Operations commented: *"We started with the 2015 car. The original intention was to do an update and improve a few things that prevented it from being competitive. However, as we delved into the development process further, we realized we could provide a better car to our future customers by starting anew in many areas. I would say the 2016/17 Focus is more a redevelopment than an evolution of the 2015 car. Under the skin, thanks to the support from our technical partners, the car features a new 2.0L engine package, a new Xtrac six-speed paddle shift transmission, all new electronics and damper and brake system, just to name a few. On the outside, the aero package we developed for this car has already proven successful on FRD's flagship Touring Car programme in the CTCC."*

Famous comebacks: Gleason, Hezemans and Target Competition

The TCR International Series welcomes back some familiar faces in Singapore, beginning with Kevin Gleason the winner of last year's night race at Marina Bay. The American driver, who finished an excellent fifth in the 2015 Driver's championship, returns at the wheel of a WestCoast Racing Honda Civic. Gleason was forced to suspend his TCR programme after the first three events of the current season due to sponsorship issues.

Italy-based Target Competition, the reigning champion team, also re-joins for the three final events of the year with two cars, one Honda Civic for Rafaël Galiana and one SEAT León for Loris Hezemans.

Galiana appeared in the Thai races at the wheel of a Civic run by WestCoast Racing, while Hezemans returns to the International Series after taking part in the first three events of the season. The young Dutchman then raced in the TCR Benelux series, in which he claimed one race victory and a second place at Zandvoort, his home racetrack. Hezemans made his maiden appearance in the TCR International Series at Singapore last year and collected his best result – second – one month later at Buriram.

Another returnee is Filipe de Souza, who will be driving a Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf. As a competitor in the TCR Asia Series, the Macanese driver took part in last year's International Series events at Singapore and Buriram. In the current season, de Souza is competing in TCR Asia for the Liqui Moly Team Engstler and lies fifth in the points table with his best result a third place at Shanghai.

Two Asian teams join for the event in Singapore

Two Asian teams that are regular competitors in the TCR Asia Seris – Viper Niza Racing and Son Veng Racing Team – will join the TCR International Series field in Singapore.
Malaysia-based Viper Niza Racing will run a SEAT León for Douglas Khoo; both the team and driver took part last year in the TCR International Series / TCR Asia joint race meetings at Singapore, Buriram and Macau.
Khoo and the team will also compete in the two final events of the season at Sepang, Malaysia and Macau.
Son Veng Racing Team from Macau will make its first appearance in the International Series entering a Volkswagen Golf driven by Neric Wei Chao Yin; the Chinese driver recently joined the TCR Asia series by claiming an encouraging fourth place in the second race at Shanghai.

Morbidelli gets a brand new Honda Civic for Singapore

The WestCoast Racing team has worked around the clock to build a brand new Honda Civic car for Gianni Morbidelli, in time for this week's event at Singapore.
Morbidelli's car was destroyed in a massive shunt during the second race at Buriram. As soon as the wreck of the Civic was trucked back to the pits, it took only a single glance for race engineer Paul Ridgeway to realise that it was damaged beyond repair. Team manager James Nixon then launched the emergency plan to build a new car for Singapore.
A new chassis was ordered from JAS Motorsport in Italy, which was delivered to JAS' Asian Workshop at Sepang, Saturday, September 9th. The chassis arrived at Singapore by truck on the following day and at the same time as the team received the containers with the parts and equipment arriving from Thailand.
Working in a warehouse by the Singapore docks, chief mechanic Marc Butler, Gavin Ovenden and Ronny Hyrskylahti stripped the wreck of the Civic and built a new one, replacing chassis, engine and a lot of other parts.

"These three guys have done a two-week work in two-and-a-half days!" commented team manager James Nixon.

The car was finished on Sunday afternoon and on Monday morning it was painted in a Singapore bodywork before being loaded on a truck and delivered to the Marina Bay Circuit paddock.

"We need to thank JAS Motorsport for supplying the chassis and parts in time despite the short notice and SEL that took care of the logistics and transportation. Without them we wouldn't be able to attempt this," Nixon said.

Weekend live on the Internet from Singapore and Russia

The TCR International Series races in Singapore will benefit from live streaming on the web, as well as the races of the TCR Russia's finale at the Kazan Ring, according to the timetable here below:

TCR International Series, Singapore (www.tcr-series.com and www.tcr-series.tv)
Saturday, 19:20 (13:20 CET) – Race 1, **streaming**
Sunday, 14:55 (08:55 CET) – Race 2, **streaming**
(all times local, GMT +8)

TCR Russia, Kazan Ring (www.tcr-series.tv and www.smp-rskg.tv)
Saturday, 11:15 (10:15 CET) – Qualifying, **timing**
Saturday, 14:00 (13:00 CET) – Race 1, **timing and streaming**
Sunday, 12:15 (11:15 CET) – Race 2, timing and streaming
(all times local, GMT +3)

entry list

TCR International Series

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Formula 1 Singapore Airlines Singapore Grand Prix

#	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	WestCoast Racing	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	Honda Civic TCR
9	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Attila Tassi (HUN)	SEAT León TCR
10	WestCoast Racing	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	Honda Civic TCR
22	Mulsanne Racing	Petr Fulín (CZE)	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR
24	WestCoast Racing	Kevin Gleason (USA)	Honda Civic TCR
33	Kissling Motorsport	Jordi Oriola (ESP)	Opel Astra TCR
35	Target Competition	Rafaël Galiana (FRA)	Honda Civic TCR
50	Target Competition	Loris Hezemans (NED)	SEAT León Cup Racer
54	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	James Nash (GBR)	SEAT León TCR
62	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Dušan Borković (SRB)	SEAT León TCR
64	Son Veng Racing Team	Neric Wei Chaoyin (CHN)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
65	Viper Niza Racing	Douglas Khoo Kok Hui (MAS)	SEAT León Cup Racer
68	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Filipe C. De Souza (MAC)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
70	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Maťo 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
99	FRD Racing Team	Martin Cao Hongwei (CHN)	Ford Focus TCR