

18 September 2016

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

SUNDAY REPORT

Title battle heats up on the streets of Singapore

For the second time this year, the TCR International Series was part of a Formula 1 Grand Prix weekend. Basking in the glamorous setting of Singapore's Marina Bay Circuit, Jean-Karl Vernay and Mikhail Grachev shared victories in the two races that were characterized by the extremely warm weather.

What the two rounds in the streets of the city state did not clarify was the battle for the title, which has intensified still further ahead of the last four races in Malaysia and Macau.

After Race 1, Stefano Comini, James Nash and Pepe Oriola were lying within three points of each other. By the end of the weekend, James Nash had retaken the leadership lead he held after Thailand, although by only 2 points over Stefano Comini and 16 to Pepe Oriola, with Jean-Karl Vernay also still in contention 28 points aback.

The Frenchman, in his Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf, put forward a stunning performance in his first visit to Singapore, confirming his predilection for street circuits (he still holds the F3 lap time record at Macau). Vernay set the pole position and took an authoritative win in Race 1 on Saturday evening, ahead of his teammate Comini and Pepe Oriola in the Craft-Bamboo Lukoil SEAT.

It was a light-to flag win in Race 2 too, with Grachev impressive in his WestCoast Racing Honda Civic. It was the fourth success this season for the Russian, who in this case benefitted from having inherited the pole for Race 2 following a number of penalties for track limits infringements during Qualifying, as well as the two safety-car periods that occurred. Dušan Borković took second for the fourth time this season with James Nash crossing the finish line in third place.

The TCR Asian tour - and the partnership with Formula One - continue with the next stop in two weeks time at Sepang in Malaysia.

Mikhail Grachev wins a shortened second race

Mikhail Grachev claimed a lights-to-flag victory – the fourth for him in the season so far – in a race that was shortened and finished under the safety-car.

The WestCoast Racing driver took the lead at the start and was able to create a small cushion between himself and Dušan Borković who eventually finished second but was denied the chance to try an overtaking manoeuvre by the safety-car interventions.

The battle behind the pair was white-hot, with a bunch of drivers fighting for the positions. The incidents that resulted from this battle eliminated or demoted some key players such as Pepe Oriola (who was given a drive-through penalty and dropped out of the points), Attila Tassi, Kevin Gleason and Gianni Morbidelli.

James Nash, Stefano Comini and Jean-Karl Vernay were able to avoid the carnage and achieved some valuable placings as far as the title fight is concerned.

Nash has re-taken the series lead, two points ahead of Comini; P. Oriola now has to fill a gap of 16 points, while Vernay is 28 points behind the leader.

Petr Fulín managed to finish in the points as he crossed the line ninth in his Alfa Romeo.

Key facts

Start – Grachev makes good use of the pole and takes the lead from Borković, Afanasyev, Tassi, Nash, Morbidelli and P. Oriola

Lap 1 – Comini puts pressure on P. Oriola; Homola punts Gleason into a spin

Lap 2 – Hezemans stops and retires with electronics issues; Fulín overtakes Cao for 12th

Lap 3 – the fight for positions heats up; there is contact between Afanasyev and Tassi and the former spins and crashes into the wall; Comini tries to overtake P. Oriola who hits Morbidelli; Comini takes advantage and moves up to fourth; the safety car is deployed

Lap 6 – the race resumes; Grachev leads from Borković, Nash, Comini, Homola and Vernay; Tassi drops down from 7th, returns to the pits and retires with steering problem

Lap 7 – P. Oriola is given a drive-through for the contact with Morbidelli; Galiana and Wei make contact while fighting for 14th position; the safety-car is deployed for the second time

Lap 9 – as the 30 minutes expire, the race finishes behind the safety car one lap before the scheduled distance; Grachev wins from Borković, Nash, Comini, Homola and Vernay

Quotes from the podium finishers in Race 2

Mikhail Grachev (winner): *“It’s an amazing feeling to win here at Singapore, I am very happy, also because I did not expect to be in a position to win, a track which does not really suit the Honda. We had a lot of understeer in all the 90-degree corners. Today, the car felt better than yesterday but, clearly, the good thing was to start from the front row. I knew that if could take a good start and stay at the front, I had a chance and that’s what happened. The two safety-car periods eventually also helped. It’s my fourth win of the season, so it’s not such a bad year for me. People ask me what could have happened if I had switched to WestCoast Racing and Honda earlier, but it is useless to speculate on that. I just took the decision that I thought was the right one at that moment, and it turned out to be a good choice.”*

press release



Dušan Borković (second): *“Second is a nice result although I would have preferred to take this first win I am running after... But here, at Singapore, I knew that I had little chance against the Honda at the start, and the start is really crucial: staying in front is a great advantage on a street circuit, and even more when it is so hot and on a track where only one line is relatively clean. I tried to fight a bit in the initial laps, also because I was seeing my intrinsic pace was at least as fast as Grachev’s, but there was nothing to do and preferred to secure second and avoid trouble, especially after rubbing against the wall at the restart after the first safety-car.”*

James Nash (third): *“I just focused on doing the best I could and avoid mistakes. I had quite a consistent race and I was helped by the two safety-car periods as it helped breaking the fast pace of the race, which I could hardly stand because of the extra weight I was carrying. It’s, of course, a good result towards the standings, although everything keeps changing all the time. We know in any case that it is going to be a 4-way battle straight until the very end. Everything will be decided in Macau...”*



Race 2 Classification after 9 Laps - 45.448 Kms

POS	NO	DRIVER	NAT	CAR	LAPS	TIME	GAP	KPH	BEST	LAP
1	8	M. GRACHEV	RUS	Honda Civic TCR	9	25:55.217		105.202	2:27.637	6
2	62	D. BORKOVIC	SRB	SEAT Leon TCR	9	25:55.673	0.456	105.171	2:28.059	2
3	54	J. NASH	GBR	SEAT Leon TCR	9	25:55.968	0.751	105.151	2:28.275	2
4	1	S. COMINI	SUI	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	9	25:56.120	0.903	105.141	2:28.197	2
5	70	M. HOMOLA	SVK	SEAT Leon TCR	9	25:56.640	1.423	105.106	2:28.150	2
6	2	J. VERNAY	FRA	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	9	25:56.898	1.681	105.088	2:27.843	2
7	10	G. MORBIDELLI	ITA	Honda Civic TCR	9	25:57.640	2.423	105.038	2:28.305	2
8	7	D. KAJAIA	GEO	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	9	25:58.287	3.070	104.995	2:28.894	2
9	22	P. FULIN	CZE	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	9	25:58.784	3.567	104.961	2:29.111	2
10	24	K. GLEASON	USA	Honda Civic TCR	9	25:59.141	3.924	104.937	2:29.175	2
11	33	J. ORIOLA	ESP	Opel Astra TCR	9	25:59.798	4.581	104.893	2:29.140	2
12	99	M. CAO	CHN	Ford Focus TCR	9	26:00.377	5.160	104.854	2:32.072	2
13	68	F. DE SOUZA	MAC	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	9	26:01.263	6.046	104.795	2:31.129	2
14	74	P. ORIOLA	ESP	SEAT Leon TCR	9	26:01.331	6.114	104.790	2:28.307	2
15	65	D. KHOO	MAS	SEAT Leon Cup Racer	9	26:12.363	17.146	104.055	2:37.541	2
16	35	R. GALIANA	FRA	Honda Civic TCR	6	17:07.424	DNF	106.003	2:31.157	2
EX	64	N. WEI *	CHN	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	6	17:08.348	DNF	105.908	2:30.832	6
17	9	A. TASSI	HUN	SEAT Leon TCR	6	17:12.415	DNF	105.491	2:28.217	2
NOT CLASSIFIED										
	77	S. AFANASYEV	RUS	SEAT Leon TCR	2	5:01.887	DNF	119.166	2:28.534	2
	50	L. HEZEMANS	NED	SEAT Leon Cup Racer	1	2:41.956	DNF	109.540		
FASTEST LAP										
	8	M. GRACHEV	RUS	Honda Civic TCR		2:27.637 on lap 6		123.505		

* PENALTIES

Car 64 - Excluded - Breach of Parc Fermé conditions - Stewards' decision no. 21

Timekeeper:

A Support Event Race to the 2016 FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX - Singapore

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2016 TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES - DRIVERS' CLASSIFICATION

pos	driver	Sakhir BAHRAIN 2/3 April			Estoril PORTUGAL 24 April			Spa-Francorchamps BELGIUM 7 May			Imola ITALY 22 May			Salsburging AUSTRIA 5 June			Oschersleben GERMANY 19 June			Sochi RUSSIA 3 July			Buriram THAILAND 28 August			Marina Bay SINGAPORE 17/18 September			Sepang MALAYSIA 1/2 October			Macau MACAU 20 November			TOTAL
		Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2				
		1	James Nash (GBR)	3	15	18	0	8	25	1	4	8	0	0	0	0	18	12	3	15	15	0	4	12	0	18	25	0	10	15					
2	Stefano Comini (SUI)	0	6	0	2	15	18	0	0	18	2	25	15	0	4	15	0	0	8	5	25	10	2	12	12	3	18	12							227
3	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	1	25	25	0	4	1	4	18	6	4	18	10	3	0	0	0	1	25	4	18	0	5	25	0	1	15	0							213
4	Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA)	0	0	0	3	18	10	0	0	25	0	0	12	4	10	25	0	8	0	3	10	18	3	10	4	5	25	8							201
5	Mat'o Homola (SVK)	0	4	0	5	12	4	0	12	12	0	10	18	0	15	10	4	25	10	0	2	2	1	0	1	4	12	10							173
6	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	2	18	6	4	25	15	0	10	0	5	0	0	2	12	8	0	6	1	2	15	0	4	15	0	2	1	6							159
7	Dušan Borković (SRB)	4	8	15	0	0	0	5	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	18	18	0	0	8	0	6	15	0	6	18							141
8	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	25	0	25	2	0	0	0	0	12	25	0	0	18	0	0	25							138
9	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	5	12	10	1	10	12	2	2	2	0	12	0	0	0	18	1	12	12	0	0	6	0	2	6	0	8	0							133
10	Davit Kajaia (GEO)	0	2	12	0	0	6	0	6	0	3	15	4	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	1	10	0	0	4							79
11	Aku Pellinen (FIN)	0	10	1	0	6	8	3	25	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							63
12	Attila Tassi (HUN)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	8	4	0	0	6	0	1	15	0	4	8	0	2	0							60
13	Antti Buri (FIN)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							28
14	Jordi Oriola (ESP)	0	0	8	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	2	1	0	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0							17
15	Kevin Gleason (USA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	1							17	
16	Jordi Gené (ESP)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							16
17	Peter Fulin (CZE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	2							15
18	Kantadhee Kusiri (THA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	8	2	-	-	-					10
19	Niklas Mackschin (GER)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							6
20	Harald Proczyk (AUT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							5
21	Luigi Ferrara (ITA)	0	0	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-						4
22	Florian Janits (AUT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							3
22	Francisco Mora (POR)	-	-	-	0	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							3
22	Michela Cerruti (ITA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-							3
25	Salman Al Khalifa (BRN)	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							2
25	Loris Hezemans (NED)	-	-	-	0	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							2
25	Carlotta Fedeli (ITA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							2
28	Alain Menu (SUI)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							1
28	Alessandra Neri (ITA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							1
28	Pierre-Yves Corthals (BEL)	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							1
28	Vladimir Sheshenin (RUS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-							1

