



16 April 2017

Rounds 3 & 4 – Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix – 14 / 16 April 2017

RACE 2 REPORT

Borković takes his first International Series victory Two points cover the top three in the Drivers' standings

Dusan Borković, driving a GE-Force Alfa Romeo Giulietta, took his first victory in the TCR International Series after a commanding performance in the stifling heat of a Bahrain Easter Sunday afternoon.

This was also the second victory for the Romeo Ferraris-built Italian car after Davit Kajaia's in the season opener at Rustavi, Georgia.

Starting from the second row of the grid, Attila Tassi made the best start and passed both Borković and pole-sitter Ferenc Ficzá going into Turn 1. Borković and Ficzá quickly struck back and overhauled the M1RA Racing Honda Civic, with Borković leading from Ficzá's Zele Racing SEAT León.

The Lukoil Craft-Bamboo SEAT of James Nash and Jean-Karl Vernay in the Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf GTi then passed Tassi, with Nash quickly snatching second place from Ficzá. When Ficzá then ran wide on lap 2, Vernay was one of four drivers to take advantage. Nash's teammate Hugo Valente took third place from Vernay on lap 3 and that was how the race ended; Borković finishing ahead of Nash and Valente.

Behind the battle for the podium places, there were several thrilling fights within the top ten. Vernay held onto fourth place despite a determined challenge from the Honda of Roberto Colciago, while Pepe Oriola finished seventh, behind Ficzá.

Reigning TCR champion Stefano Comini and Gianni Morbidelli made contact on a number of occasions, with the Swiss driver's Comtoy Racing Audi RS 3 LMS eventually finishing in ninth place, ahead of the Italian in a WestCoast Racing VW.

Davit Kajaia lost a valuable sixth place on the last lap as he coasted to a halt with a stream of oil trailing from the underside of the Alfa Romeo; the oil sump was cracked after he had jumped over a kerb.

Two points now cover the top three in the Drivers' series; Vernay has 52 points with Borković on 51 and Colciago a further point adrift. Oriola and Kajaia – the two winners on the opening weekend in Georgia – are in fourth and fifth places with 45 and 39 points respectively.

The TCR International Series will resume for rounds 5 and 6 at Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium, on May 4 to 5, in the frame of the 6 Hours of Spa, second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

Key facts

Grid – Sunny and hot, but windy; all 16 cars take place, including Corthals' Opel, after the DG Sport Compétition crew managed to replace the clutch in the ninety minutes before the start of the race



Start – Tassi makes the best start and leads from Borković going into Turn 1; Borković and Ficza then both pass Tassi

Lap 1 – Nash and Vernay pass Tassi for 3rd and 4th places; Nash passes Ficza for 2nd

Lap 2 – Ficza runs wide and allows Vernay, Valente, Tassi and Colciago to pass; Colciago passes Tassi for 5th place; Comini is fighting with Ficza for 8th place; Altoè stops on track with both front tyres punctured

Lap 3 – Valente passes Vernay for 3rd place; there are contacts between Tassi and Vernay and between Nash and Tassi

Lap 4 – Kajaia locks up under braking and makes contact with Tassi; Ficza passes Tassi for 6th place

Lap 5 – Comini passes Kajaia for 8th, but Oriola then passes Comini and Kajaia re-takes 8th

Lap 6 – Morbidelli and Comini make contact and Morbidelli passes Comini for 10th place

Lap 7 – There is contact between Oriola and Kajaia; Colciago is attacking Vernay for 4th

Lap 8 – Tassi runs wide and Kajaia passes for 7th place; Oriola then passes Tassi for 8th; Comini passes Morbidelli for 10th.

Lap 9 – Kajaia stops on track with oil trailing from the car; Borković takes the win from Nash and Valente.

Quotes from the Race 2 podium finishers

Dušan Borković (1st): *“I am really, really, really happy with the performance; I must thank the engineers and mechanics at Romeo Ferraris and GE-Force for giving me such a good car. I had a lot of chances to win last year but made some stupid mistakes, particularly in the first races when I was usually in the top five. Today I took advantage of being on the front row and when I saw all the fights going on after the first few corners I knew I just had to control the race. The Honda cars always make a good start but I knew I had to be in front to avoid running in the slipstream of another car and so keeping the air temperature down - luckily I know how to attack! The Alfa is much harder on the tyres than the SEAT I drove last year because of the higher torque so there are some good points for us and some not so good. I’m just delighted to win in a beautiful place like Bahrain at a Formula One event.”*

James Nash (2nd): *“The start is always the most important part so I was quite aggressive right at the beginning and found myself in second with a whole queue behind me. I could see Hugo was behind Vernay and I’d much rather fight with Hugo than Jean-Karl! I couldn’t catch Dušan so it was all about making sure that my second place was secure. We were all making mistakes and it was all about who made the fewest. The temperatures were really high and the tyres were struggling; it was really easy to snatch a wheel and miss an apex. I started to make mistakes over the last few laps and Hugo was catching me, but thankfully he also made some errors and created a gap for me.”*



Hugo Valente (3rd): *“I’m very happy. The biggest part of the job was today because starting from P8 was always going to be more difficult than yesterday. This is my third podium finish in a row and I’ve only finished three races so I’m really happy with a double podium from this weekend for sure. I said it was really important to score a lot of points this weekend and so I’m over the moon with the performance. I thought I was going to catch James at the end but I had a lot of tyre degradation as well. I’m really happy for him as he had a really difficult weekend in Georgia so it’s good to share a first podium with him; I hope there will be a lot of others this season. It was a fun race with lots of overtaking and defending and Vernay was like my bodyguard – pushing everyone off in front and then keeping Colciago behind. I’m looking forward to Spa now, I know the track and it will be interesting to see how the car behaves there.”*

2017 TCR International Series – calendar

2 April – Rustavi International Motorpark, Georgia

16 April – Bahrain International Circuit (F1 event)

6 May – Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium (WEC event)

14 May – Autodromo di Monza, Italy (ELMS event)

11 June – Salzburgring, Austria

2 July – Hungaroring, Budapest (GT Open event)

9 July – Motorsport Arena Oschersleben, Germany (with ADAC TCR Germany)

3 September – Chang International Circuit, Buriram (with TCR Thailand)

8 October – Zhejiang International Circuit, China (with TCR China)

26 November – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi (F1 event)



Race 2 Classification after 9 Laps - 48.462 Kms

| POS | NO | DRIVER | NAT | ENTRANT | LAPS | TIME | GAP | KPH | BEST | LAP |
|-----------------------|----|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|-------------------|--------|---------|----------|-----|
| 1 | 62 | D. BORKOVIC | SRB | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 9 | 20:20.221 | | 142.976 | 2:13.476 | 2 |
| 2 | 54 | J. NASH | GBR | SEAT Leon TCR | 9 | 20:24.375 | 4.154 | 142.491 | 2:13.814 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | H. VALENTE | FRA | SEAT Leon TCR | 9 | 20:25.082 | 4.861 | 142.409 | 2:14.293 | 3 |
| 4 | 2 | J. VERNAY | FRA | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 9 | 20:25.612 | 5.391 | 142.347 | 2:14.335 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 | R. COLCIAGO | ITA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 9 | 20:25.911 | 5.690 | 142.313 | 2:14.290 | 4 |
| 6 | 55 | F. FICZA | HUN | SEAT Leon TCR | 9 | 20:29.382 | 9.161 | 141.911 | 2:15.042 | 3 |
| 7 | 74 | P. ORIOLA | ESP | SEAT Leon TCR | 9 | 20:35.188 | 14.967 | 141.244 | 2:14.946 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | A. TASSI | HUN | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 9 | 20:35.375 | 15.154 | 141.222 | 2:15.024 | 3 |
| 9 | 1 | S. COMINI | SUI | Audi RS 3 LMS TCR | 9 | 20:35.482 | 15.261 | 141.210 | 2:14.771 | 3 |
| 10 | 10 | G. MORBIDELLI | ITA | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 9 | 20:36.746 | 16.525 | 141.066 | 2:14.532 | 3 |
| 11 | 23 | P. CORTHALS | BEL | Opel Astra TCR | 9 | 20:37.715 | 17.494 | 140.955 | 2:15.755 | 2 |
| 12 | 88 | M. CERRUTI | ITA | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 9 | 20:38.445 | 18.224 | 140.872 | 2:15.748 | 4 |
| 13 | 70 | M. HOMOLA | SVK | Opel Astra TCR | 9 | 20:42.507 | 22.286 | 140.412 | 2:15.927 | 2 |
| 14 | 18 | D. ENDE | USA | SEAT Leon TCR | 9 | 20:54.230 | 34.009 | 139.099 | 2:16.828 | 2 |
| 15 | 16 | D. KAJAIA | GEO | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 8 | 18:14.970 | DNF | 141.538 | 2:14.498 | 3 |
| NOT CLASSIFIED | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | | G. ALTOE | ITA | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 1 | 2:22.971 | DNF | 130.078 | | |
| FASTEST LAP | | | | | | | | | | |
| 62 | | D. BORKOVIC | SRB | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | | 2:13.476 on lap 2 | | 145.967 | | |

Timekeeper:

A Support Event Race to the 2017 FORMULA 1 GULF AIR BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX - Sakhir

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