



29 August 2017

Rounds 15 & 16 – Chang International Circuit, Buriram – 2 / 3 Sep. 2017

PREVIEW

Thailand hosts the TCR International Series for the third time

The TCR International Series will resume this weekend at Buriram's Chang International Circuit in Thailand, following an eight-week summer break after the meeting in Oschersleben, Germany.

The series visits Buriram for the third time and the Thai event has become one of the favourites for drivers and teams members who appreciate the state-of-the-art Chang International Circuit designed by Hermann Tilke that opened in 2014, but also the warm welcome provided by the local personnel and fans.

The track layout is well-suited to Touring Car competition, providing several overtaking places and corners where three or four cars can run abreast.

In the previous TCR appearances, SEAT drivers have taken the lion's share of results. In 2015 Pepe Oriola and Stefano Comini took a win apiece; the Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Team posted a 1-2-3 in Race 1 (Oriola, Gené and Afanasyev) and Target Competition then returned a 1-2 in Race 2 with Comini and Hezemans.

Last year things went even better for Lukoil Craft-Bamboo, with the Oriola-Nash duo on top in Race 1 and the Englishman emerging as the winner in Race 2.

The TCR International Series will hit the track on Saturday, with two 30-minute Practice sessions and Qualifying, split into Q1 (20 minutes) and Q2 (10 minutes, for the twelve fastest in Q1).

The two races will then be run back-to-back on Sunday, in the early afternoon.

TCR in Buriram – the event at a glance

Lap distance: 4.54 km

Race distance: 14 laps

Start: standing

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

Timetable:	Saturday, 10:30/11:00	Free Practice 1
	Saturday, 12:30/13:00	Free Practice 2
	Saturday, 15:30/16:05	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Sunday, 14:30	Race 1
	Sunday, 16:05	Race 2

all times: GMT +7

Nine points cover the first four drivers in the standings

The fight for the TCR International Series Drivers' title is as close as ever, with the first four drivers in the standings covered by only nine points.

Scoring one third place in the previous event at Oschersleben enabled Jean-Karl Vernay to reclaim the lead in the classification and now, with 153 points scored so far, the Frenchman has a slim margin of two points ahead of Attila Tassi who had jumped on top of the standings after his home race meeting at the Hungaroring.

Roberto Colciago and the reigning champion Stefano Comini are currently lying in third and fourth positions, with gaps of eight and nine points. Behind the leading quartet, Pepe Oriola is fifth, but his 110 points are still keeping him well in contention.

To make the situation even spicier, these five drivers are driving four different car models: Volkswagen (Vernay), Honda (Tassi and Colciago), Audi (Comini) and SEAT (Oriola).

All the other competitors have only theoretical chances to fight for the title.

The battle for the Teams' title seems to be restricted to M1RA (308 points) and Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing (275), while the first three cars in the 'Model of the Year' classification – the Honda Civic, SEAT León and Volkswagen Golf GTI – are split by only 51 points:

Success ballast for Morbidelli, Lloyd and Homola

Gianni Morbidelli's hat trick at Oschersleben – pole position and two race wins at the wheel of his WestCoast Racing Volkswagen Golf GTI – not only earned him 55 points in the championship, but also the maximum Success Ballast of 30 kilos for the next event at Buriram's Chang International Circuit.

The second-best scorer in Germany was Lukoil Craft-Bamboo's Daniel Lloyd who will receive 20 kilos of Success Ballast, while Mat'o Homola of DG Sport Compétition will carry the 10 extra kilos imposed on the third best scorer of the previous event.

As a result, Morbidelli's Volkswagen will weigh 1295kg (1285kg minimum weight + 30kg Success Ballast - 20kg Balance of Performance adjustment), Lloyd's SEAT León 1295kg (1285kg + 20kg SB - 10kg BoP) and Homola's Opel Astra 1305 kg (1285kg + 10kg SB + 10kg BoP).

TCR Thailand competitors join the International Series field

The event in Buriram will also count as rounds 7 and 8 of TCR Thailand and six of the local competitors will join the International Series field. They are split into two classes: PRO and PRO-AM.

Pasarit Promsombat (RMI Racing Team by Sunoco – SEAT León DSG) is the current leader of the PRO Class; he has won no fewer than nine national titles in different categories, including three in the popular Thailand Super Series.

The other five drivers are all competing in the PRO-AM class that is currently led on equal points by Chariya Nuya (Billionaire Boys Racing – Honda Civic) and Nattanid Lewattanavaragul (Moring Racing - SEAT León DSG). Nuya has already won two rounds of the series at the Chang International Circuit, while Lewattanavaragul won the second race at Bangsaen, becoming the first lady driver to win a round of a TCR national championship.



The field is completed by Nattachak Hanjitkasen (TBN MK Ihere Racing – Honda Civic), Rattanin Leenutaphong (Yontrakit Racing Team - SEAT León DSG) and Malaysia's Douglas Khoo (Viper Niza Racing - SEAT León) who is an International Series veteran having already joined several times in the two previous years.

A Thai driver for DG Sport Compétition at Buriram

DG Sport Compétition has signed a local driver for the next TCR International Series event at Buriram's Chang International Circuit in Thailand.

It will be Munkong Sathienthirakul – nicknamed 'Turbo' – who will sit at the wheel of the Belgian team's second Opel Astra car, alongside regular driver Mat'o Homola.

One of the top runners in the popular Thailand Super Series, Sathienthirakul was crowned champion of the Super 2000 class in 2015. This will be his third appearance in the TCR International Series as he already took part twice in the Buriram event in previous years. In 2015 he drove a SEAT León for Craft-Bamboo and a Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf last year. His best result was a brilliant 9th place in the 2015 Race 2.

Full live coverage from Chang International Circuit

Fans will be able to follow live on the Internet the whole action of the TCR International Series at Buriram on www.tcr-series.com and www.tcr-series.tv according to the following timetable.

Saturday, 10:30 – Free Practice 1, **timing and streaming**

Saturday, 12:30 – Free Practice 2, **timing and streaming**

Saturday, 15:30 – Qualifying, **timing and streaming**

Sunday, 14:25 – Race 1, **timing and streaming**

Sunday, 16:00 – Race 2, **timing and streaming**

(all times local, GMT +7)

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

18 June – Hungaroring, Hungary (DTM Event)

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

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

8 October – Zhejiang Circuit, China (with TCR Asia & TCR China)

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