



2 September 2017

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

### QUALIFYING REPORT

#### Mat'o Homola places the Opel Astra back on pole

Mat'o Homola claimed his third pole position of the season, after those in Bahrain and Austria, at the wheel of his DG Sport Compétition Opel Astra car. The young Slovak topped the timesheet at the end of one of the most thrilling Qualifying sessions ever, that saw many position changes, penalties, red flags and breakdowns.

Eventually, Homola's fastest lap in Q2 was quicker than James Nash's by a mere four thousandths of a second, while Norbert Michelisz managed to qualify in third ahead of Jean-Karl Vernay, meaning four different brands – Opel, SEAT, Honda and Volkswagen – fill the first two rows of the grid for tomorrow's Race 1. Attila Tassi, Vernay's closest competitor in the title fight, qualified in fifth position.

The GE Force Alfa Romeo team suffered the greatest disappointment, as both the team's drivers - Dušan Borković and Davit Kajaia – were eliminated despite being among the fastest. The Serbian broke his suspension after posting a provisional fastest lap in Q1 and was then not admitted to Q2 for receiving external aid, while his teammate blew the engine at the beginning of Q2.

Local hero Kantadhee Kusiri managed to qualify a brilliant eighth, while Aurélien Panis qualified tenth and won pole position on the reverse grid for Race 2 alongside Stefano Comini. Panis will start from the back of the grid in Race 1 due to an engine change.

The first race will start tomorrow at 14:30 local time (live streaming at [www.tcr-series.com](http://www.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv)).

#### Qualifying 1: Michelisz beats Homola by three tenths

It was a frantic start to the session, as very fast laps were clocked straight away. After Nash's 1:44.121, Kajaia and Borković improved to 1:43.820 and 1:43.631 respectively. However, immediately afterwards the Serbian broke the front suspension after hitting a pile of tyres, stopping on the track and so prompting the red flag. Just before the session was suspended, Vernay (1:43.731) and Nash (1:43.971) had moved up to second and fourth.

The session resumed with 13 minutes still on the clock and immediately Oriola posted a new provisional fastest lap of 1:43.478 that was bettered by Vernay's 1:43.456. As all competitors were eager to improve, Race Control began to disallow times due to disrespect of track limits.

Vernay improved further to 1:43.447, but with three minutes left, Michelisz stopped the clock at 1:43.315, towing Tassi to set the second fastest lap of 1:43.365. Eventually the young Hungarian was demoted to third when Homola moved up to second with a lap of 1:43.350.

Despite setting the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest lap, Borković was not allowed to run in Q2 because his car had been towed back to the pits after the incident, which promoted Morbidelli to tenth. The following drivers went through to Q2: Michelisz, Homola, Tassi, Vernay, Oriola, Altoè, Nash, Kajaia, Panis, Comini, Kusiri and Morbidelli.

Among those who failed to make the cut were Huff, Lloyd and Vervisch.



Chariya Nuya set the pole in TCR Thailand, beating Morin Racing's lady driver Nattanid Leewattanavaragul.

#### Qualifying 2: Homola sets pole by four thousandths

The second part of the session began just like the first. Michelisz (1:43.359), Tassi (1:43.322), Nash (1:43.314) and Kajaia (1:43.078) clocked consecutive provisional fastest laps. However, Kajaia's, Michelisz's and Tassi's times were disallowed for infringing track limits. A similar penalty was imposed to Vernay and Oriola.

Homola set a new provisional fastest lap of 1:43.093 just before the session was disrupted by the red flag when Kajaia's car stopped on the track with a smoking engine.

When the session resumed only three minutes were left, meaning that drivers had only one attempt to improve. Michelisz moved up into provisional second place (1:43.228), but Nash did better (1:43.097), failing to steal pole position from Homola by four thousandths.

### **Driver quotes after the Qualifying session**

Mat'ò Homola (1<sup>st</sup>): *"Thanks to my team – we had a problem in Q1 and they repaired it quickly to enable me to go through to Q2. In Q2 there was a red flag and there was chaos but I managed to do one good lap and it was enough, so I'm really glad for that. I like this circuit and the car is behaving how I want it to. Everything is okay and so I'm really happy. I know the biggest part of the points comes in the races, not Qualifying, so I'm not really over the moon right now because I know this is just one part of my job and the second comes tomorrow."*

James Nash (2<sup>nd</sup>): *"This circuit certainly throws up the odd challenge for me, but the results are always positive. It's a track that suits my style and I enjoy driving it. Just after setting my best lap time, I hit the brakes for the hairpin at Turn 3, where I had the crash last year, and the driveshaft just snapped. Thankfully, the time was already done but I was only four thousandths from pole so I'm disappointed with that. Looking ahead to tomorrow, my starts have always been pretty good so I'll do what I normally do and I think I've got the race pace to pull away."*

Norbert Michelisz (3<sup>rd</sup>): *"P3 is okay, but the most important thing was to have the three cars in the top ten. It's important for the team's point of view and Attila also managed to get into the top five, so overall I'm really proud of the guys. I think we showed great teamwork in Qualifying and we helped each other with slipstreaming so I'm really happy. If you are on pole, it's less risk for one race but if you are on the third row there is risk because you can suffer some damage if someone comes from the back. I would have preferred Attila to have been on the front row, but if everything goes well he has the possibility of being on the podium twice tomorrow."*

Aurelien Panis (10<sup>th</sup>): *"It was a perfect result for us because of the penalty for the engine change after Oschersleben, so our goal was P10 and that was what we did. I'm very happy; the team did a great job and the car was very nice to drive. Pole position for Race 2 means we are all very happy. My goal will be to make a good start and I have Race 1 in which to practice a bit. It will be important not to make any mistakes in Race 1 and then I can focus on race 2. The level in TCR is very high, so I am happy to be with them and I think it will be a great fight."*



Chariya Nuya (19<sup>th</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup> TCR Thailand): *“I feel very happy to be the first driver in the TCR Thailand category. I did my best, but it wasn’t enough to be with the International Series drivers. I need to spend a lot more time in the car to practice if I’m to be able to compete with them. The car is good and works very well and I will try my best in the two races tomorrow.”*

### **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)

## TCR International Series 2017

### Official Combined Qualifying - TCR International Series

2 - 3 September 2017  
Buriram - 4554 mtr.

Pos	Nbr	Cls	PIC	Name / Entrant	Car	Qual-1	Qual-2	Gap
1	70		1	Mat'ó Homola (SVK) DG Sport Compétition	Opel Astra TCR	1:43.350	1:43.093	
2	54		2	James Nash (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing	SEAT León TCR	1:43.672	1:43.097	0.004
3	59		3	Norbert Michelisz (HUN) M1RA	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:43.315	1:43.228	0.135
4	2		4	Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA) Leopard Racing Team WRT	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	1:43.447	1:43.320	0.227
5	9		5	Attila Tassi (HUN) M1RA	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:43.365	1:43.331	0.238
6	74		6	Pepe Oriola (ESP) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing	SEAT León TCR	1:43.478	1:43.384	0.291
7	21		7	Giacomo Altoè (ITA) M1RA	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:43.500	1:43.503	0.410
8	19		8	Kantadhee Kusiri (THA) West Coast Racing	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	1:43.936	1:43.561	0.468
9	1		9	Stefano Comini (SUI) Comtoy Racing	Audi RS 3 LMS TCR	1:43.874	1:43.695	0.602
10	28		10	Aurélien Panis (FRA) Boutsen Ginion Racing	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:43.813	1:43.743	0.650
11	10		11	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) West Coast Racing	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	1:44.226	1:44.064	0.971
12	16		12	Davit Kajaia (GEO) GE-Force	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	1:43.783		0.690
13	62		0	Dušan Borković (SRB) GE-Force	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	1:43.631		0.538
14	17		0	Daniel Lloyd (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing	SEAT León TCR	1:44.246		1.153
15	6		0	Frédéric Vervisch (BEL) Comtoy Racing	Audi RS 3 LMS TCR	1:44.316		1.223
16	3		0	Rob Huff (GBR) Leopard Racing Team WRT	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	1:44.321		1.228
17	67		0	Munkong Sathienthirakul (THA) DG Sport Compétition	Opel Astra TCR	1:44.870		1.777
18	18		0	Duncan Ende (USA) Icarus Motorsports	SEAT León TCR	1:45.068		1.975
19	85	T	0	Chariya Nuya (THA) Billionaire Boys Racing	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:45.082		1.989
20	96	T	0	Nattanid Leewattanavaragul (THA) Morin Racing Team	SEAT León TCR DSG	1:46.061		2.968
21	84	T	0	Pasarit Promsombat (THA) RMI Racing Team by Sunoco	SEAT León TCR DSG	1:46.098		3.005
22	83	T	0	Rattanin Leenutaphong (THA) Yontrakit Racing Team	SEAT León TCR DSG	1:46.900		3.807
23	86	T	0	Nattachak Hanjitkasen (THA) TBN MK Ihere Racing Team	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	1:47.055		3.962
24	65	T	0	Douglas Khoo Kok Hui (MAS) Viper Niza Racing	SEAT León TCR	1:51.876		8.783


Fastest time : 1:43.093 in lap 2 by nbr. 70 : Mat'ó Homola (Opel Astra TCR)

Publication-time

Results: [www.raceresults.nu](http://www.raceresults.nu)

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Steward	Steward	Steward	
		Pongsakorn Harnwaree	
Page 1 of 1	Results remain provisional pending technical examination and decisions from the stewards of the meeting		

