



2 October 2017

Rounds 17 & 18 – Zhejiang Circuit, China – 7 / 8 October 2017**PREVIEW****Brand new Chinese racetrack hosts a TCR event**

Three TCR series will share the bill in the first international event ever hosted by the new Zhejiang Circuit.

The track is located in the Kenyan region, near the city of Shaoxing and is 50 km away from the Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport that serves Hangzhou, the capital of the Zhejiang Province and one of China's fastest growing regions in terms of economy and technology.

The Zhejiang Circuit, conceived by Apex Circuit Design, was inaugurated at the end of last year. With a total length of 3.2 kilometres, its main track has been granted Grade 2 status by the FIA; it includes 16 turns in different angles and direction and has a 22-metre elevation between its lowest and highest points.

The TCR event will feature the TCR International Series and joint races of the TCR Asia and TCR China series.

Track activities will begin on Friday, but the main action will be on Saturday (International Series Qualifying and the two TCR Asia/TCR China races) and Sunday (the TCR China long race in the morning and the TCR International Series races in the afternoon).

TCR in Zhejiang – the event at a glance

Lap distance: 3.20 km

Race distance: 19 laps

Start: standing

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

Timetable:	Friday, 09:30/10:00	TCR Asia + TCR China, Free Practice 1
	Friday, 15:00/15:30	TCR Asia + TCR China, Free Practice 2
	Saturday, 09:00/09:20	TCR Asia + TCR China, Qualifying 1
	Saturday, 10:00/10:30	TCR International, Free Practice 1
	Saturday, 10:50/11:10	TCR Asia + TCR China, Qualifying 2
	Saturday, 12:00/12:30	TCR International, Free Practice 2
	Saturday, 14:25/14:55	TCR Asia + TCR China, Race 1
	Saturday, 15:30/16:05	TCR International, Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Saturday, 16:30/17:00	TCR Asia + TCR China, Race 2
	Sunday, 10:00/11:00	TCR China, Race 3
	Sunday, 14:30	TCR International, Race 1
	Sunday, 16:05	TCR International, Race 2

all times: GMT +8



Tarquini and Menu to drive the new Hyundai i30 N TCR

One of the main features of the TCR International Series event in Zhejiang will be the maiden appearance of the new Hyundai i30 N TCR; this will mark the latest step in the technical development of the Hyundai Motorsport-built car that has already undergone an extensive testing programme.

The two i30 N TCR cars will be run by the Italy-based BRC Racing Team and driven by two very experienced Touring Car aces - the former World, European and British champion Gabriele Tarquini and Alain Menu, twice British champion.

Hyundai Motorsport Customer Racing Manager Andrea Adamo said: *"The debut of the i30 N TCR in the TCR International Series is an important weekend for everyone involved in the project. We feel we have developed a competitive package for the category, but this will be the first time that we can directly compare to other cars in the series. Both the i30 N TCR drivers will be ineligible for points. It is not our intention to get involved in the very close fight at the top of the points' standings. Instead, at the Zhejiang Circuit we will concentrate on continuing our development work during the race weekend."*

Tarquini commented: *"The Zhejiang Circuit is very different from the tracks in Europe where we have tested. It is a relatively slow layout with lots of technical sections, so we will need to work on the set-up. This is all part of our development work with the car, but also an opportunity to show the competitiveness of our design. These are our targets for the weekend. I expect a small gap to the regular teams and the fact that this is the first time the TCR International Series runs at Zhejiang should keep the action close."*

Alain Menu added: *"From the testing I have completed, the i30 N TCR feels to be very strong. The TCR International Series is very competitive, so the weekend at the Zhejiang Circuit will be a real challenge. As a driver the event will be a very good chance to show the performance of our car against the others on the grid. However, we have to consider that our focus during the weekend is to take advantage of the track time to continue to develop the i30 N TCR before the first chassis are delivered to customers."*

The Hyundai cars will run with a temporary homologation form and, therefore, will not be eligible to score points.

The final sprint of a four-way battle for the title

The penultimate event of the season in China will launch the final sprint in the fight for the TCR International Series titles.

There are four major pretenders to the Drivers' crown: the 18-year old Hungarian Attila Tassi (M1RA Honda Civic) tops the standings with 179 points, only two more compared to Jean-Karl Vernay (Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf GTI).

The 2015 and 2016 champion Stefano Comini (Comtoy Racing Audi RS3 LMS) is placed third, with a gap of 14 points from the leader, while Tassi's teammate Roberto Colciago lies a further 20 points adrift having missed the previous event in Thailand because of medical reasons.

The Italian – who had broken three ribs in a pile up at Oschersleben – has been declared fit to rejoin and is eager to recover. After all, there are still 110 points at stake...

Mathematically speaking, this keeps several other drivers in contention. The best placed of them being Pepe Oriola (110 points) and Dušan Borković (108).



Following the races in Buriram, M1RA has built a solid margin of 93 points in the Teams' classification ahead of Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing (382 against 289), while Leopard Racing is currently third (247 points). However, with 190 points on offer in the two last events, anything is still possible.

The situation is similar in the 'Model of the Year' classification that is led by the Honda Civic with 451 points ahead of the Volkswagen Golf GTI (355) and the SEAT León (335).

Success ballast for Tassi, Borković and Altoè

The previous event in Buriram provided an unusual situation as far as the Success Ballast is concerned.

In fact, two pairs of drivers scored the same amount of points. M1RA teammates Norbert Michelisz and Attila Tassi were the event's best scorers with 28 points, while Dušan Borković (GE-Force Alfa Romeo Giulietta) and Giacomo Altoè (M1RA) followed with 26 points.

As a result – and considering that Michelisz will hand the Honda Civic car back to Roberto Colciago – Tassi will carry the maximum Success Ballast of 30 kilos at Zhejiang.

The 20 kilos of Success Ballast for the second best scorer will not be allocated, while both Borković and Altoè will have their cars laden by the 10 extra kilos imposed on the third best scorer.

In terms of running weight, this means that Tassi's Honda will weigh 1335kg (1285kg minimum weight + 30kg Success Ballast + 20kg Balance of Performance adjustment), Borković's Alfa Romeo 1275kg (1285kg + 10kg SB - 20kg BoP) and Altoè's Honda 1315 kg (1285kg + 10kg SB + 20kg BoP).

TCR Asia and TCR China to run together

The event in Zhejiang will also feature as the final rounds (11 and 12) of TCR Asia and rounds 5 and 6 of the TCR China's inaugural season.

The two championships will run together in the Free Practice, Qualifying and the two Sprint Races of 30 minutes each. Than TCR China competitors will also take part in the 60-minute Race 3 on Sunday morning.

Just as in the TCR International Series, four drivers are in a close battle for the title. Kantadhee Kusiri from Thailand is the current leader, having scored 150 points in his Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf GTI; he is closely followed by his compatriot Tin Sritrai (Team Thailand Honda Civic) on 139.5 points and his own teammate Diego Moran from Ecuador on 139 points. Malaysia's Lai Wee Sing (R Engineering Honda Civic) ranks fourth on 129 points, while his compatriot and colleague Abdul Kaathir is fifth with 108.

After the first two events of TCR China, the classification is led by the Hongkongers Sunny Wong and Alex Fung who share a Volkswagen Golf GTI run by TeamWork Motorsport; they have scored 101 points, two more than their compatriot Andy Yan (NewFaster Team Audi RS3 LMS). Yan's teammate Huang Chu Han from China follows in third position with 93 points.

ZZZ Team enters two Audi cars in the Zhejiang event

The Zhejiang-based ZZZ Team will take part in the TCR International Series at their home circuit.

The Chinese outfit will field a couple of Audi RS3 LMS cars for Tengyi Jiang and Zhendong Zhang, two of the most experienced and successful local Touring Car drivers and teammates also in the China Touring Car Championship with the Shanghai VW 333 Racing.

32-year old Jiang has established himself as one of the top CTCC drivers, claiming several race wins at the wheel of Ford and Volkswagen cars and clinching the Super Production title in 2014. He has already made a one-off appearance in the TCR International Series, at the Shanghai International Circuit in 2015, when he drove a SEAT León for the Craft-Bamboo Team and was classified ninth in the second race.

Zhang, 25 years old, is the reigning CTCC Super Production champion having successfully defended the title won in 2015. Before joining the Volkswagen team in 2012 he had raced for Haima.

Jiang and Zhang are currently ranking third and fourth in the 2017 CTCC Super Cup.

"We are very excited to join the TCR international Series and race at Zhejiang Circuit. It is our very maiden appearance and we have some very competitive racers from China. I believe that the TCR international Series is the ideal platform to show what we can do," said Dennis Zhang, the team manager of ZZZ.

Denis Dupont to make his début with Comtoyoy Racing

Only a few days after having raced in the TCR Benelux event at Mettet, Denis Dupont has flown to China to make his maiden appearance in the TCR International Series at the wheel of a SEAT León entered by Comtoyoy Racing and supported by the RACB National Team.

The 24-year old Belgian has established himself as one of the top competitors in TCR Benelux in which he shares the RACB National Team SEAT with Sam Dejonghe. They were classified third in the 2016 championship, with two race victories and are currently lying 7th this year, having won the 60-minute Qualifying race at Zolder.

"Racing in the International Series is a project I have worked on for a few months and I'm pleased that, with support from my partners and Comtoyoy Racing, I have been given the opportunity to race in China," said Dupont who added. *"I am very happy to drive a SEAT León, because I know it well. This will help me a lot, as I won't have the opportunity to test the car I will drive in Zhejiang, and being familiar with the car will let me focus on getting to know the track."*

Rafaël Galiana returns with WestCoast Racing

TCR International Series in Asia has become an unmissable appointment for Rafaël Galiana. In fact, for the third consecutive year the French businessman and motorsport enthusiast will join the series for the Chinese round in Zhejiang.



After racing in 2015 and 2016 at the wheel of SEAT León and Honda Civic Cars, this time Galiana will drive a Volkswagen Golf GTI for WestCoast Racing, the same team that entered him last year in the Buriram event. His best result so far was an eighth place in last year's Race 1 at Macau.

"I'm very happy to drive again in the TCR International Series, especially at Zhejiang, because it is an interesting new circuit. Every year I would like to do more races, but I'm always very busy. I have just delivered a new Grade 1 racetrack in Kuwait that should be inaugurated by the middle of 2018 and now I am working on a few karting circuits in China," said Galiana who is known as 'Mr Tecpro' because of a safety barrier he launched in 2000 after several years of research and development. The Tecpro barrier has proved to be much more effective than the tyre walls that were used in most of the circuits and now the company collaborates with FIA, FIM, and a number of National Sporting Authorities and works together with racetrack designers and architects.

Full live coverage from Zhejiang Circuit

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

Saturday, 09:00 – TCR Asia + TCR China Qualifying 1, **timing**
Saturday, 10:00 – TCR International Free Practice 1, **timing and streaming**
Saturday, 10:50 – TCR Asia + TCR China Qualifying 2, **timing**
Saturday, 12:00 – TCR International Free Practice 2, **timing and streaming**
Saturday, 14:25 – TCR Asia + TCR China Race 1, **timing and streaming**
Saturday, 15:30 – TCR International Qualifying, **timing and streaming**
Saturday, 16:25 – TCR Asia + TCR China Race 2, **timing and streaming**
Sunday, 09:55 – TCR China Race 3, **timing and streaming**
Sunday, 14:25 – Race 1, **timing and streaming**
Sunday, 16:00 – Race 2, **timing and streaming**

(all times local, GMT +8)

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)
18 November – Dubai Autodrome, United Arab Emirates