

10 May 2015

Rounds 7 & 8 – Portimão, Portugal – 9/10 May 2015

RACE REPORT

Danish drivers make a clean sweep in Portugal

Nicki Thiim and Michel Nykær caused the Danish flag to be run up twice on the podium during the fourth race meeting of the TCR International Series in Portugal.

Thiim was a dominant force in his first appearance at the wheel of the Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi TT, topping the practice sessions and qualifying before taking a brilliant lights-to-flag victory in Race 1. The first for Audi in TCR. The decision taken by the German team to invite two of Audi Sport Customer Racing's young lions really paid off, as Thiim and Kelvin Van der Linde were able to help significantly in developing the TT.

They seemed likely to deliver a second victory in Race 2, as they were chasing Nykær; however, Thiim made a mistake and Van der Linde's progress was stopped by electronics issues.

This left Nykær flying towards his first win of the season, which was a well deserved one because he had been able to fend off all attacks from Van der Linde until the South African pulled off the track. Thiim's and Nykær's successes made it seven different winners out of eight races.

The two races produced many brilliant performances like those of Jordi Gené and Kevin Gleason, who finished on the podium as did Lorenzo Veglia (third in Race 1), who made his first appearance among the top-three after a brilliant qualifying. There are more who deserve to be mentioned. Mikhail Grachev scored in both races, despite only receiving his car just before yesterday's qualifying and starting from the back of the grid in Race 2, José Monroy managed to put up fights with the series' regulars on his first TCR appearance, and Oscar Nogués pocketed the first points with the Campos Racing Opel Astra (ninth and seventh). Looking at the championship fight, Stefano Comini and Pepe Oriola escaped virtually unscathed from a difficult weekend for the leaders. The Swiss remains on top of the classification with a margin of 12 points ahead of the Spaniard. Gianni Morbidelli and Andrea Belicchi had a black day; the former did not score and the latter collected only one point. With one second and one third, Jordi Gené was then able to climb to fourth in the standings.

The TCR International Series will resume for Rounds 9 and 10 at Monza on May 24.



Race 1 – Thiim claims first TCR victory for Audi

At his first visit to the TCR Nicki Thiim, the Audi Sport Customer racing driver, took the win in the Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi TT on a warm afternoon in the Algarve. The Dane led from pole to chequered flag and was four seconds ahead of Jordi Gené at the line in the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil SEAT León, with his team-mate Lorenzo Veglia third (this was the first podium result for the young Italian).

Oscar Nogués scored the first points for Campos Racing with the Opel Astra OPC. The highest placed local driver was José Monroy, who finished eighth in his Veloso Motorsport SEAT León, while his team-mate Francisco Mora took the final point for tenth.

It was a positive result for championship leader, Stefano Comini in the Target Competition SEAT in fifth, as the three drivers behind him in the points failed to score. One of them was Gianni Morbidelli who was involved in a lot of the action in his West Coast Racing Honda Civic and retired on lap eight after contact with Andrea Belicchi.

The race was action packed for the whole 13 laps with many exciting overtaking moves and quite a lot of contact.

Key moments

Grid – Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil refueled Sergey Afanasyev's car on the grid and the Russian was given a drive-through

Start – Thiim and Gené take a good start, with the Audi driver keeping the lead

Lap 1 – Nykær retires and Afanasyev observes the drive-through; Thiim leads from Gené

Lap 2 – There is contact between Morbidelli and Oriola; Mora overtakes Morbidelli for seventh; Van der Linde chases Comini for fourth

Lap 3 – There is contact between Comini and Van der Linde; Oriola chases them

Lap 4 – Van der Linde and Comini swap positions five and six; Oriola and Morbidelli overtake Van der Linde

Lap 5 – Comini and Oriola fight for fourth, they are chased by Morbidelli and Van der Linde

Lap 6 – Grachev overtakes Mora for eighth

Lap 7 – Oriola and Comini make contact; Oriola has bodywork damage; Morbidelli loses several positions while avoiding the incident; Van der Linde overtakes Oriola for fifth; Gleason overtakes Morbidelli for eighth

Lap 8 – There is contact between Belicchi and Morbidelli; Morbidelli and Oriola pit for repairs

Lap 9 – Nogués moves up to ninth and Monroy to eighth as Belicchi slows down

Lap 10 - Van der Linde passes Comini for fourth

Lap 13 – Thiim takes win from Gené, with Veglia third.



Race 2 – Nykjær resists pressure and scores maiden win

From second on the reversed grid it was the Target Competition SEAT León of Michel Nykjær that crossed the finishing line of Race 2 in the Algarve first.

The Dane made a better start than pole sitter, Kevin Gleason in the West Coast Racing Honda Civic and stayed out front for all 13 laps. However, he came under huge pressure at around half distance and on lap nine had both Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi TT cars of Kelvin Van der Linde and Nicki Thiim breathing down his neck. He coped well with the pressure, which then evaporated on laps 10 and 11 when both Thiim and Van der Linde retired respectively.

Despite starting from the back of the grid after Liqui Moly Team Engstler team took his SEAT León out of parc fermé to work on it, Mikhail Grachev finished a brilliant sixth. Championship leader Stefano Comini was looking set to increase his points standings, but then a contact with a lap to go saw him dropping down the field into 11th. José Monroy again took local honours and finished fifth in his Veloso Motorsport SEAT León.

Key moments

Grid – Mikhail Grachev starts from the back of the grid as the team asked for neutralization of parc fermé

Start – Gleason is on pole, but Nykjær takes the best start from second

Lap 1 – Nykjær leads from Gleason; Morbidelli moves up to sixth; Afanasyev pits and retire

Lap 2 – Thiim lies ninth; Veglia hits Morbidelli; they both pit and retire

Lap 3 – Van der Linde overtakes Comini for third

Lap 4 – Thiim overtakes Oriola for fifth; Van der Linde overtakes Gleason for second; Oriola overtakes Thiim to take back fifth

Lap 5 – Belicchi chases Thiim

Lap 6 – Thiim overtakes Oriola for fifth; Van der Linde chases Nykjær

Lap 7 – Van der Linde reduces gap to Nykjær; Thiim overtakes Comini for fourth

Lap 8 – Nykjær defends the lead from Van der Linde; Thiim overtakes Gleason for third

Lap 9 – Thiim closes the gap on battling Nykjær and Van der Linde

Lap 10 – Nykjær, Van der Linde and Thiim are very close; Thiim hits a kerb and retire with a broken wheel; Gleason is back to third

Lap 11 – Van der Linde stops out on track with an electronics problem

Lap 12 – Oriola fights for third with Comini, they make contact; Belicchi moves up to third and Gené up to fourth because of the incident; Oriola is now fifth and Monroy sixth

Lap 13 – Nykjær wins from Gleason and Gené



What the race winners had to say

Nicki Thiim, winner of Race 1: *“It is just fantastic to come here and bring the confidence back into the team. For the whole weekend we have been the fastest and I am really happy to have done my job as well as I could. I had a lot of fun and it’s the most important thing. I think we have got a really good car for the next races. You can always do small things to improve it. Some things you can do off the track and I explained what my feelings are about what they can still adjust on the car. I think they will go home now and find some more things. I just want to say I had a lot of fun, especially in the second race that is touring cars as you like it. It was my mistake in race two – a silly one - but this is racing.”*

Michel Nykjær, winner of Race 2: *“In the first race I hit Belicchi and the radiator was broken. All the mechanics gave everything for me to make the car ready for race two. I made a very good start, was first in the corner and had Gleason behind to chase me. After that it was Van der Linde and Thiim and that was a hard race for me, because they were quite fast on the straight but I could manage to close the door. I am just very happy for the victory for the team as they were able to make the car ready for the second race. It is a dream. I had some problem with the brakes as I started to brake earlier each time to stop the car; brakes, tyres, the driver - everything got a little bit hot. But I was able to manage to the end of the race.”*





TCR International Series
Autódromo Internacional do Algarve

TCR International Series - Race 1
OFFICIAL

9 - 10 May 2015
Autodromo Internacional Algarve - 4652

Pos	Nbr	Name / Entrant	Car	Gap	Total time	Fastest	In	Avg. Speed
1	3	Nicki Thiim (DEN) Liqui Moly Team Enastler	Audi TT	-- 13 laps --	25:13.998	1:54.529	2	143,82
2	88	Jordi Gené (ESP) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	4.074	25:18.072	1:55.374	2	143,44
3	7	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA) Liqui Moly Team Enastler	Seat Leon	6.541	25:20.540	1:55.504	3	143,20
4	9	Kelvin Van Der Linde (RSA) Liqui Moly Team Enastler	Audi TT	12.086	25:26.084	1:55.832	2	142,68
5	25	Stefano Comini (SUI) Target Competition	Seat Leon	14.541	25:28.540	1:55.960	2	142,45
6	8	Mikhail Grachev (RUS) Liqui Moly Team Enastler	Seat Leon	17.893	25:31.891	1:56.081	3	142,14
7	24	Kevin Gleason (USA) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	20.094	25:34.092	1:56.298	2	141,94
8	18	José Monroy (POR) Veloso Motorsport	Seat Leon	20.425	25:34.423	1:56.211	2	141,91
9	19	Oscar Nogués (ESP) Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	23.044	25:37.042	1:56.319	3	141,67
10	50	Francisco Mora (POR) Veloso Motorsport	Seat Leon	30.107	25:44.105	1:56.059	2	141,02
11	77	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	35.348	25:49.346	1:55.473	3	140,54
12	33	Andrea Belicchi (ITA) Target Competition	Seat Leon	42.451	25:56.449	1:56.093	4	139,90
13	20	Igor Skuz (UKR) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	50.142	26:04.140	1:57.019	3	139,21
NOT CLASSIFIED		Classification Limit (75% of 13 laps) = 9 laps						
DNC	74	Pepe Oriola (ESP) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	8 laps	16:14.696	1:55.915	3	137,48
DNC	10	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	8 laps	17:11.077	1:55.791	3	129,96
DNC	17	Michel Nykaer (DEN) Target Competition	Seat Leon	2 laps	4:13.813	2:10.612	1	131,98

Summary Best Laptimes

Nbr	Name / Team name	Car	Class	Fastest Lapttime	In	Speed
3	Nicki Thiim	Audi TT	TCR	1:54.529	2	146,25 kph

Fastest time : 1:54.529 in lap 2 by nbr. 3 : Nicki Thiim (Audi TT)

Results and Laptimes : <https://livetiming.raceresults.nu/autodromodoalgarve>

Publication-time

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Clerk of the Course	Stewards	Timekeeper  Miguel Glória - CRO 3741/14
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Autódromo Internacional do Algarve – 9 / 10 May 2015



TCR International Series
Autódromo Internacional do Algarve

TCR International Series - Race 2
OFFICIAL

9 - 10 May 2015
Autodromo Internacional Algarve - 4652

Pos	Nbr	Name / Entrant	Car	Gap	Total time	Fastest	In	Avg. Speed
1	17	Michel Nykaer (DEN) Target Competition	Seat Leon	-- 13 laps --	25:18.975	1:55.345	3	143,35
2	24	Kevin Gleason (USA) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	3.152	25:22.127	1:55.815	3	143,05
3	88	Jordi Gené (ESP) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	6.360	25:25.336	1:55.298	3	142,75
4	74	Pepe Oriola (ESP) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	7.020	25:25.996	1:55.824	2	142,69
5	18	José Monroy (POR) Veloso Motorsport	Seat Leon	7.496	25:26.472	1:55.709	3	142,65
6	8	Mikhail Grachev (RUS) Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Seat Leon	11.040	25:30.015	1:55.967	4	142,32
7	19	Oscar Nogués (ESP) Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	12.030	25:31.006	1:56.000	3	142,22
8	50	Francisco Mora (POR) Veloso Motorsport	Seat Leon	20.999	25:39.975	1:56.204	5	141,40
9	20	Igor Skuz (UKR) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	22.644	25:41.620	1:56.881	3	141,25
10	33	Andrea Belicchi (ITA) Target Competition	Seat Leon	24.865	25:43.840	1:55.745	3	141,04
11	25	Stefano Comini (SUI) Target Competition	Seat Leon	39.366	25:58.341	1:56.147	3	139,73
12	9	Kelvin Van Der Linde (RSA) Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	-- 10 laps --	19:25.908	1:55.230	3	143,66
13	3	Nicki Thiim (DEN) Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	36.629	20:04.770	1:54.592	2	139,03
NOT CLASSIFIED		Classification Limit (75% of 13 laps) = 9 laps						
DNC	7	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA) Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Seat Leon	2 laps	4:38.758	2:03.645	1	120,17
DNC	10	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	1 laps	2:02.917	2:02.917	1	136,27
DNC	77	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS) Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Seat Leon	1 laps	2:20.409		0	119,29

Summary Best Laptimes

Nbr	Name / Team name	Car	Class	Fastest Laptime	In	Speed
3	Nicki Thiim	Audi TT	TCR	1:54.592	2	146,17 kph

Fastest time : 1:54.592 in lap 2 by nbr. 3 : Nicki Thiim (Audi TT)

Results and Laptimes : <https://livetiming.raceresults.nu/autodromodoalgarve>

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