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TCR teams in two testing days at Valencia

Several of the teams that will be competing in TCR series during 2016 gathered at Valencia's Circuito Ricardo Tormo for two days of testing.

B3 Racing Team Hungary ran its three SEAT León cars for Dušan Borković, Mat'ó Homola and Attila Tassi; Stefano Comini and Jean-Karl Vernay were driving the Volkswagen Golf cars of Leopard Racing; six drivers shared the testing duties in the VWs of Liqui Moly Team Engstler (Davit Kajaia and Michail Grachev for the International Series, Andy Yan and Filipe Clemente de Souza for TCR Asia, Tim Zimmermann and Tom Lautenschlager for TCR Germany); Michela Cerruti was driving the Romeo Ferraris Alfa Romeo Giulietta, Aku Pellinen sat in the JAS Motorsport Honda Civic, Aurélien Comte was at the wheel of a Peugeot 308 Racing Cup run by Sébastien Loeb Racing; Target Competition was using two Opel Astra cars with four drivers (Jordi Oriola, Josh Files, Loris Hezemans and Mike Beckhusen. The Top Run Subaru STi hit the track on the second day that was mostly dedicated to the Balance of Performance test.

A selection of pictures is available at www.tcr-series.com (Multimedia area).

Larini drove eight cars in Balance of Performance test

Nicola Larini had his hands full, jumping back and forth from one car to another, during the TCR Balance of Performance test at Valencia.

The Italian driver got behind the wheel of eight different cars: Alfa Romeo Giulietta, Honda Civic, Opel Astra, Peugeot 308 Racing Cup, Subaru STi, Volkswagen Golf GTi and two models of SEAT León, 2015 and 2016.

Following the instructions given to him by TCR Technical Director Andreas Bellu and TCR Technical Delegate Umberto Fasolo, Larini ran each car in a number of different tests.

"We asked him to complete five-lap stints with the cars on the minimum weight and then with the maximum 70kg ballast on board. Then he performed corse-down tests that consist in accelerating the car and leaving it going in neutral to evaluate aerodynamics and fluency. Finally we ran acceleration tests with 100% and 90% of the power," Bellu explained.

The BoP results should be published in about one week's time.

Quotes collected during the test days at Valencia

Stefano Comini: *"It was an exciting day and the first time is something you never forget. The work we have done was focusing at preparing out Golf Gti TCR to win. It was a very successful day, which gave us the opportunity to learn and understand the new car better."*

Jean-Karl Vernay: *"The car is beautiful! It looks great and I felt very comfortable with it. It was just a shakedown but I can't wait to be in Magny Cours next week to start working on it before the first races in Bahrain."*

Walter Grummerer (Target Competition): *"We just were delivered our first car ahead of this test, so the real work has started now. There is still much to do and we had to solve a number of the usual small glitches, as expected. The Opel Astra has a great potential and we are working well together with Opel Motorsport, so we are really looking forward to the season and this new project."*

Dušan Borković: *"It is really nice to be joining the TCR International Series and be part of this new concept. I have been testing the SEAT León in 2016 specs and can say it is a big step forward with respect to last year's car. The main challenge for me is to adapt to the Michelin tyres and not to use tyre warmers. My main goal before the start of the season is to learn how to manage the tyres in a different way."*

Mat'o Homola: *"We focused mainly on suspension and vehicle balance setting. The new sequential gearbox is a lot lighter than the one used last year and changed the vehicle weight distribution, so we need to adjust the setting accordingly. We have tested several brake pad compounds and we are still looking for the optimal solution that can make the car faster and easier to handle."*

Aku Pellinen: *"It was only my second time at the wheel of the Honda Civic TCR, after a short shake-down in Italy. The car seems to be very good, one of the best front-wheel drive cars I have ever driven. I still have a lot of work to do to be able to compete with the TCR experts, but I will face this first season as a learning process, avoiding putting too much pressure on myself."*

Michela Cerruti: *"This is the first test we did on a long track, and we were satisfied to see that everything works. I think the Giulietta has a very good basis, but clearly room for improvement is wide, especially with regard to its behaviour in cornering. We would have liked to have more time for testing and developing, but that is true for everybody! Still, it's good to see that we did not have any major hiccups and we are confident for the kick-off in Bahrain."*

Michael Grachev: *"It's nice to be on track again, I was getting impatient... From what I was able to see, the small improvements introduced into the VW Golf during the winter are effective. You can see the difference. We know the car is good and we are confident."*

Why did a Peugeot run in the Valencia test?

The participation of a Peugeot 308 Racing Cup to the TCR Balance of Performance test in Valencia has immediately excited curiosity and set speculations.

Florent Meilhaud, Responsible for 2RM Project at Peugeot Sport explained the situation: *"Since last year, when we started working on the new 308 Racing Cup for our one make trophy, we realised that the car was perfectly matching the spirit of TCR. The logical consequence was to approach the promoter of the International Series to see how the 308 Racing Cup could fit in the championship."*

During the Spanish test the RCZ Racing Cup French champion Aurélien Comte drove the car, while Sébastien Loeb Racing provided logistic support.

"We came to Valencia to show the car and to understand where it is compared to the others. But we also would like to understand what we can do to join the series in a near future," Meilhaud said.

The Peugeot 308 Racing Cup is fitted with a 1.6 litre engine. *"We think that our car has a strong potential thanks to a very good chassis and its light weight. We trust the TCR technical department to establish a Balance of Performance that could help the 308 Racing Cup to be competitive."*

The promoters of several TCR series met in Valencia

The promoters of ten championships and series that made TCR cars eligible have met today in Valencia and talked about common strategies and synergies for the upcoming season.

Marcello Lotti, promoter of the TCR International Series welcomed the attendees: *"This year our common goal is to enhance the TCR Community worldwide and its corporate identity. We need to work together to increase the popularity of the TCR concept on a global level and we are already heading for the right way with a prediction of more than one hundred TCR cars that will be racing in more than one hundreds events, from Europe to the Far East and from Latin America to the Middle East."*

The promoters who attended were representing the regional or national series of Asia, Benelux, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, Thailand, USA, plus the Touring Car Endurance Series.