

5 June 2016

Rounds 9 & 10 – Salzburgring, Austria – 4 / 5 June 2016

SUNDAY REPORT

Results of Austrian races rock the championship

Describing this weekend's TCR International Series race meeting at the Salzburgring as 'eventful' would be an understatement. The changing weather conditions and the unique challenges of the circuit contributed to an outcome that has significantly altered the situation in the championship fight. With ten out of twenty-two races now in the archives, the top six drivers are separated by just 18 points – the equivalent of a second position.

Stefano Comini has regained the lead by one point ahead of Pepe Oriola who was stopped by a technical issue while on his way to winning the first race. After starting from the rear of the grid after missing Qualifying, also because of a technical problem, James Nash has climbed up to third, eight points adrift of the leader. Jean-Karl Vernay claimed a brilliant victory on the flooded track in the second race and is now lying fourth with a gap of 13 points, exactly the same as Gianni Morbidelli. Mat'ò Homola completes the sextet a further five points adrift, the only driver of those top six who still has to win a race.

Although this classification gives quite an accurate picture of how the forces performed on the track so far this season, today's results were, in some way, misleading. The SEAT cars, that appeared to be the most at ease at the Salzburgring, were defeated more by a chain of adverse circumstances than by the competition. And the Volkswagen cars, that struggled to stay on the pace in the dry, were definitely helped by the rain in the second race.

But all this is now history. The simple truth is that six drivers at the wheel of cars built by three different manufacturers are closely grouped for what promises to be an exciting second part of the season.

A few words need to be spent on Mikhail Grachev and the Mulsanne Racing team. After waiting one-and-half seasons to claim his first victory, Grachev scored his second in the very next race; he was also helped by Lady Luck and inherited the lead in Race 1 after Pepe Oriola withdrew, but he was able to retain it despite strong pressure from Nash and Homola.

As for Mulsanne Racing, they have worked hard, together with the Romeo Ferraris engineering company, to both further develop the Alfa Romeo Giulietta and run a second car. The promising lap times clocked by Petr Fulín in Practice and Qualifying made the team dream of some brilliant results, but the incident in which the Czech driver was involved at the start of Race 1 swept away all their hopes. The first point scored by Michela Cerruti was not an adequate reward for their efforts.

The TCR International Series will resume on June 18 and 19 at Oschersleben, Germany, for rounds 11 and 12.

Race 1 – Second victory in a row for Mikhail Grachev

Two weeks after breaking his duck at Imola, where he claimed a maiden victory in the TCR International Series, Mikhail Grachev scored a second one in a row at the end of another race plenty of drama. The WestCoast Racing driver managed to survive a series of incidents and technical failures that eliminated some of the main players such as the Oriola brothers, Dušan Borković and Harald Proczyk.

It was a sweet and sour race for Mulsanne Racing; Petr Fulín's Giulietta was eliminated in the incident at the start, while Michela Cerruti scored her first championship point.

In terms of the championship fight, the result played in favour James Nash who finished second and Gianni Morbidelli, who was able to recover to fourth position after being involved in the incident with Jordi Oriola at the start. With Pepe Oriola out of the points and Stefano Comini classified eighth Nash moved up to third, with a gap of 19 points, while Morbidelli lies only one further point adrift.

Key facts

Start – Vernay sprints, from Pepe Oriola; behind them there is contact between Jordi Oriola and Morbidelli; Proczyk spins in avoidance and is hit by Fulín

Lap 1 – Pepe Oriola passes Vernay and takes the lead; Proczyk and Fulín pit for repairs

Lap 2 – Jordi Oriola passes Vernay for second

Lap 3 – Afanasiev goes off onto the gravel trap at Turn 7

Lap 4 – Jordi Oriola is chasing his brother Pepe; Borković, Grachev, Vernay and Nash fight for third

Lap 5 – Jordi Oriola slows down and pit with a sensor problem; the safety car is prompted to recover Afanasyev's car

Lap 7 – the race resumes; Pepe Oriola leads from Grachev, Borković, Nash, Vernay, Homola and Morbidelli

Lap 8 – Homola and Morbidelli overtake Vernay and move up to fifth and sixth

Lap 11 – Pepe Oriola is chased by Grachev

Lap 13 – Pepe Oriola slows down and retires with a suspected westgate failure; Grachev inherits the lead with Borković on his tail

Lap 16 – Grachev defends the lead from Borković who is under pressure from Nash

Lap 17 – Borković and Nash make contact while fighting for second; the Serbian driver goes off onto the gravel at Turn 11; Grachev wins from Nash, Homola and Morbidelli

Race 2 – Jean-Karl Vernay surfaces as the winner in the flood

Weather conditions affected the results of the second race. Eventually was Jean-Karl Vernay who managed to make fewer mistakes than the other competitors and claimed his second victory of the season.

Sergey Afanasyev was classified second and reached his first podium of the season so far, while Stefano Comini scored a third place that propelled him back on top of the Drivers' Championship standings.

With Pepe Oriola sidelined by the technical failure that had stopped him in Race 1, four other top contenders – Gianni Morbidelli, Jordi Oriola and Mikhail Grachev – had their chances spoiled by a wrong tyre choice that forced them to pit for a change at the end of the formation lap. Eventually Morbidelli managed to recover until a sixth position that might prove crucial for his ambitions in the championship.

Key facts

Grid – Fulín, Pepe Oriola and Borković's do not appear; it starts pouring rain

Warm up lap – Cerruti's car stalls on the grid and is pushed back to the pits; at the end of the lap four cars pit for changing tyres: Morbidelli, Grachev, Tassi and Jordi Oriola

Start – Vernay takes the lead from Kajaia, Janits and Comini

Lap 1 – Janits is given a drive through penalty for changing tyres on the grid after the 5-minute board

Lap 2 – Vernay leads from Kajaia, Comini and Proczyk

Lap 3 – Afanasyev overtakes Nash for fourth

Lap 4 – Comini and Kajaia have a close fight for second place

Lap 7 – Proczyk makes contact with Jordi Oriola and stops, losing fourth position

Lap 8 – Kajaia's car aquaplanes at the braking and hits the tyre-pack at Turn 1

Lap 9 – the safety car is deployed while Kajaia's car is recovered

Lap 12 – the race resumes; Comini misses the braking point at Turn 1 and takes the escape road, dropping from second to third

Lap 13 – Morbidelli and Jordi Oriola overtake Tassi and move up to sixth and seventh

Lap 14 – Janits goes wide at Turn 11 while trying to overtake Tassi

Lap 15 – Vernay imitates Comini at Turn 1 and loses the lead to Afanasyev; but the French retakes the position at Turn 11

Lap 17 – Vernay wins from Afanasyev, Comini and Nash

Quotes from the podium finishers at Salzburgring

Mikhail Grachev (winner Race 1): *"It was really unexpected for me to win in Imola, but here it was even more unexpected because I was P9 at the start. My role was to save the car and just to finish so I could start Race 2 from the front row. I made a good start and I was lucky to avoid the incident with the other cars flying around me. Without Pepe Oriola's technical problems it would have been impossible for me to win because he was in front and I had no real opportunity to overtake. We had a compromise set-up in case of a wet race and it was a little bit softer than it needed to be, but it meant I had a better exit from some of the corners, which meant I could be fast on the straights."*

press release



Jean-Karl Vernay (winner Race 2): *“We woke up this morning and Stefano (Comini) said it was going to rain! Race 2 was crazy but I made a good start and I was able to get a good gap. After the safety car, I was able to make a good gap again. I then made a little mistake and Sergei (Afanasyev) was able to pass me, but I re-passed him on the back straight. I think it was a perfect result for the points; we weren’t thinking about that when we arrived because it was dry. Thanks to the team for their hard work this weekend – I just hope I don’t have too much weight next time.”*

James Nash (2nd in Race 1): *“Qualifying was not how we wanted to start the weekend, but championships come from your bad weekends. We managed to push our way through the accident at the first corner, which meant we were in the hunt. The incident with Borković was marginal as I couldn’t see him alongside me and I was committed. We had the smallest of touches, which sent him off.”*

Sergey Afanasyev (2nd in Race 2): *“Most of this race was done in the pits so my thanks to the guys who were working on my car. There was no other solution except to end parc fermé and to start from the back of the grid. In the first race, I planned to keep four wheels on the track, but only managed to do it with three! In the second race, my aim was to score points after the technical issues in Imola. The team did all the hard work – all I did was keep four wheels on the track.”*

Mat’o Homola (3rd in Race 1): *“Qualifying was really bad because I had a crash when I was in P1 – thanks to the team because they repaired my car really fast. The start of Race 1 was disappointing because of the Turn 1 accident, but I had a really good race pace and I was able to recover and fight for the podium positions. It was really nice for me”*

Stefano Comini (3rd in Race 2): *“Before the weekend, I sent Pepe Oriola an SMS and said I was looking forward to passing him in the Championship! I am really disappointed with the Golf because if you look at the first race we had no chance to battle on the dry track. I was the first one to put on wet tyres on the grid for Race 2 and it was the right choice – thanks to Leopard Racing, as this result put me back on top of the classification.”*

TCR International Series - Salzburgring

TCR International Series - Race 1
OFFICIAL RESULT

4 - 5 June 2016
Salzburgring - 4240 mtr.

Pl.	Nr.	Name / Bewerber	Fahrzeug	Diff.	Gesamtzeit	Schnellste	In	Schnitt
1	8	Mikhail Grachev WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	-- 17 laps --	27:40.614	1:27.221	10	156.26
2	54	James Nash TeamCraft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR	1.420	27:42.034	1:26.787	4	156.12
3	70	Mat'ó Homola B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR	1.627	27:42.241	1:26.989	4	156.10
4	10	Gianni Morbidelli WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	2.304	27:42.918	1:27.048	12	156.04
5	2	Jean-Karl Vernay Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	8.244	27:48.858	1:27.504	11	155.48
6	9	Attila Tassi B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR	10.746	27:51.360	1:27.280	4	155.25
7	7	Davit Kajaia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	11.305	27:51.919	1:27.765	9	155.20
8	1	Stefano Comini Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	12.387	27:53.001	1:28.051	4	155.10
9	45	Florian Janits Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	12.864	27:53.478	1:28.103	10	155.05
10	88	Michela Cerruti Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	28.268	28:08.882	1:29.189	11	153.64
11	62	Dusan Borkovic B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR	-- 16 laps --	26:12.535	1:27.178	11	155.30
12	74	Pepe Oriola TeamCraft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR	-- 15 laps --	29:00.455	1:27.125	5	131.55
Nicht gewertet Klassifikations Limit (75% von 17 Rnd) = 13 Rnd								
DNC	33	Jordi Oriola Target Competition	Honda Civic TCR	-- 8 laps --	29:04.136	1:27.337	2	70.01
DNC	77	Sergey Afanasyev TeamCraft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR	-- 2 laps --	13:05.093	1:36.289	1	38.88
DNC	43	Harald Proczyk WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	13:17.882	26:22.975	3:20.866	1	19.28
DNC	22	Petr Fulin Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	-- 1 laps --	3:55.465	3:50.463	1	64.82

Schnellste Runde : 1:26.787 in Runde 4 durch nr. 54 : James Nash (SEAT León TCR)

Aushangzeit

Ergebnisse und Rundenzeiten : www.raceresults.at

Zeitnahme durch : SDO SportTiming

Rennleiter	Steward	Zeitmessung
Rainer Werner		Bernd Jung, Mike Salmon
Seite 1 von 1	Die Ergebnisse sind vorläufig, vorbehaltlich der technischen Nachuntersuchung	

TCR International Series - Salzburgring

TCR International Series - Race 2
OFFICIAL RESULT

4 - 5 June 2016
Salzburgring - 4240 mtr.

Pl.	Nr.	Name / Bewerber	Fahrzeug	Diff.	Gesamtzeit	Schnellste	In	Schnitt
1	2	Jean-Karl Vernay Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	-- 17 laps --	30:51.124	1:36.507	13	140.17
2	77	Sergey Afanasyev TeamCraft-Bamboon LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR	0.955	30:52.079	1:36.864	13	140.10
3	1	Stefano Comini Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	2.065	30:53.189	1:36.912	14	140.02
4	54	James Nash TeamCraft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR	5.698	30:56.822	1:37.387	16	139.74
5	70	Mat'ó Homola B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR	7.889	30:59.013	1:37.392	16	139.58
6	10	Gianni Morbidelli WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	8.297	30:59.421	1:36.845	16	139.55
7	33	Jordi Oriola Target Competition	Honda Civic TCR	9.392	31:00.516	1:36.915	16	139.47
8	9	Attila Tassi B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR	16.390	31:07.514	1:38.582	16	138.94
9	8	Mikhail Grachev WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	16.846	31:07.970	1:37.820	17	138.91
10	45	Florian Janits Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	31.036	31:22.160	1:39.298	16	137.86
Nicht gewertet Klassifikations Limit (75% von 17 Rnd) = 13 Rnd								
DNC	7	Davit Kajaia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR	-- 7 laps --	11:49.468	1:39.096	7	150.60
DNC	43	Harald Proczyk WestCoast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	-- 5 laps --	8:34.298	1:40.286	5	148.39
DNC	88	Michela Cerruti Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	1:02.392	9:36.690	1:45.639	3	132.34

Schnelste Runde : 1:36.507 in Runde 13 durch nr. 2: Jean-Karl Vernay (Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR)

Aushangzeit

Ergebnisse und Rundenzeiten : www.raceresults.at

Zeitnahme durch : SDO SportTiming

Rennleiter	Steward	Zeitmessung	
Rainer Werner		Bernd Jung, Mike Salmon	
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