

28 August 2016

**Rounds 15 & 16 – Buriram, Thailand – 27 / 28 August 2016**

## **SUNDAY REPORT**

### **The Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil boys star in Thailand**

James Nash, Pepe Oriola and the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil were the clear winners at Buriram's Chang International Circuit today. In the heat of the Thai summer, the Brit and the Spaniard out-paced the competition, despite a difficult start of the weekend. Oriola arrived in Thailand with an injured foot and did not take part in Friday's testing. Nash set the fastest lap but was victim of a severe crash in the closing minutes. Hopefully, his car could be somehow brought back to racing conditions. The success of the red-and-white SEAT León cars proved once again the competitiveness of the team on this racetrack, where it had posted a memorable 1-2-3 last year.

This time, after taking the pole beating Gianni Morbidelli by only one thousandth of a second, Oriola took a clear lights-to-flag win in Race 1 ahead of Nash and Morbidelli. Race 2 saw a dominant victory of Nash, who beat Mihail Grachev (West Coast Honda Civic) and Dušan Borković (B3 Racing SEAT León).

The Serbian driver emerged as the winner of a terrific battle, arguably one of the most exciting shows in the history of TCR International Series, which also involved Stefano Comini, Davit Kajaia, Attila Tassi, Sergey Afanasyev, Jean-Karl Vernay and Kanthadee Kusiri. For several laps, these seven drivers fought intensely, though mostly with fair play, delivering countless overtaking manoeuvres and several contacts. The show was a great feast for local fans, as the unexpected guest at that level of competition was young local gun Kusiri, who made his Touring Car debut with the Honda Civic of Team Eakie BBR Kaiten and is currently racing F3 cars in the Euroformula Open.

The Thai races also yield a narrowing situation in the standings of the series: James Nash has now retaken the lead, only 7 points ahead of team mate Pepe Oriola, with the Leopard Racing duo of Comini and Vernay lying in third and fourth, 10 and 41 points behind respectively. With 165 points still at stake, nothing is decided, although the scenario for the last three events of the season is now getting clearer.

### **Race 1 – Oriola-Nash finish 1-2 for Craft-Bamboo Lukoil**

Pepe Oriola claimed a dominant lights-to-flag victory in the first race at the Chang International Circuit, while his teammate James Nash secured a triumphant 1-2 finish for the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil. Gianni Morbidelli finished third after he was forced to hand the second position to Nash halfway through the race.

The Leopard Racing duo of Stefano Comini and Jean-Karl Vernay finished in fourth and fifth after a close fight. Kantadhee Kusiri was classified a brilliant sixth and won the TCR Thailand race; Narasak Ittiritpong (11<sup>th</sup> overall) and Alexander Mies (13<sup>th</sup>) filled the other podium positions.

The victory enabled Oriola to stretch his point lead to 15 points ahead of Comini, while Nash was only three points behind the reigning champion.

## Key facts

Start – Oriola sprints from the pole and leads from Morbidelli and Nash who takes a good start from the third row

Lap 1 – Comini overtakes Vernay for fourth; Lemvard pits for repairs after a contact

Lap 2 – Ittiritpong, Tassi, Afanasyev and Kajaia are in a close fight for 10<sup>th</sup> place

Lap 4 – Fulín is chasing Homola who is eighth; the latter slows down and comes back to the pits with a drive shaft problem

Lap 6 – Comini and Vernay have a fight for fourth place

Lap 7 – Nash overtakes Morbidelli for second; Afanasyev overtakes Kajaia for tenth

Lap 8 – Galiana, Bulbon and Supaphongs make contact while fighting for 17<sup>th</sup> position

Lap 9 – Grachev pits for repairs after a contact

Lap 10 – Ferrara stops on the track with suspected engine problems

Lap 11 – after starting from the back of the grid, Sathienthirakul is chasing Ittiritpong for 11<sup>th</sup> position

Lap 12 – Grachev re-joins

Lap 13 – Fulín misses the braking point at T3 and crashes while he was eighth

Lap 14 – Oriola wins from Nash, Morbidelli, Comini, Vernay and Kusiri

## **Race 2 – James Nash wins and takes the point lead**

The second race at the Chang International Circuit was plenty of drama, starting with the crash that eliminated Gianni Morbidelli and going on with a contact that forced Pepe Oriola to pit for repairs and multi-car tough battles for the positions.

James Nash was able to steer away off all the troubles and claimed his second victory of the season that might prove a crucial one in the title fight, as enabled the Craft-Bamboo Lukoil driver to take the leadership of the standings, seven points clear of Oriola and ten of Stefano Comini.

Mikhail Grachev and Dušan Borković completed the podium. The Russian was aiming for another victory after taking the lead from the pole, but eventually he could not resist to Nash's attacks, as his car was not well balanced after a collision in the first race. As to Borković he survived an extremely physical fight that involved no less than eight drivers and was plenty of contacts that kept the Stewards busy with some investigations.

## Key facts

Grid – Ferrara’s Subaru and Fulín’s Alfa Romeo have been withdrawn following an engine failure and the Race 1 crash respectively

Start – Grachev makes good use of the pole to take the lead ahead of Kusiri and Nash

Lap 1 – Morbidelli moves up to fourth overtaking Afanasyev and Borković; soon afterwards Morbidelli loses his car at T8 and crashes hard into the barrier

Lap 2 – the safety car is deployed while the wreck of Morbidelli’s car is recovered

Lap 3 – Oriola pits for repairs after a contact with another car and re-joins

Lap 4 – the race resumes: Grachev leads from Kusiri, Nash, Borković, Comini, Afanasyev and Vernay

Lap 5 – Nash overtakes Kusiri for second; Sathienthirakul moves up to 12<sup>th</sup> ahead of Hanjtkasen and Lemvard

Lap 6 – Comini overtakes Borković for fourth

Lap 7 – Grachev defends the lead from Nash; Afanasyev runs wide at T12 and drops from sixth to tenth

Lap 8 – Nash overtakes Grachev at T1 and takes the lead; Galiana pits after a spin

Lap 9 – Grachev is closely chased by Kusiri, Comini and Vernay

Lap 10 – Afanasyev overtakes Ittiritpong for ninth

Lap 11 – Vernay and Comini overtake Kusiri for third; Borković joins the fight and in one move climbs up to third after clashing with both Kusiri and Comini

Lap 12 – the fight for third place heats up with Borković, Comini and Kusiri swapping positions several times

Lap 13 – Borković and Comini are third and fourth; Kusiri drops to seventh behind Tassi and Vernay

Lap 14 – Kajaia moves up to fifth overtaking Kusiri, Vernay and Tassi in the same manoeuvre; Sathienthirakul and Ittiritpong crash while fighting for tenth

Lap 16 – Nash wins ahead of Grachev, Borković and Comini; Kajaia beats Tassi, Afanasyev, Vernay and Kusiri in the sprint for the fifth place; Mies and Lemvard complete the TCR Thailand podium

## **Quotes from the podium finishers in the two races**

James Nash (winner R2 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in R1): *“A very good weekend for me, especially after the big accident on Thursday. In Race 1, not much happened. I had a good start, passing both Comini and Vernay, and when Morbidelli went a little bit wide, I could take second. This is a circuit where you really have to avoid going wide, as there is much dirt out of the track. It’s a track that suits me very well, and Race 2 went very smoothly. I could pass Grachev, take the lead and keep it. I think we were clever throughout the weekend and keep raising our game. I am now leading the championship, but I don’t want to think about that until Macau.”*



Pepe Oriola (winner Race 1): *"It was a great weekend for the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil and for our title bids, so I am very happy. In Race 1, I took the best start of the season and could stay in front of Gianni then it was a matter of managing the situation and the rise of temperatures. In Race 2, I had a normal start in the middle of the pack and a contact with Tassi at first corner. Then, Gianni had his accident and I had to go wide into the dirt to avoid him. Something must have punctured my front left tyre because at the following braking, the tyre blew together with body parts. Luckily, the safety-car was out and I did not lose much time, but finished 11<sup>th</sup> and took no points. Still, leaving Thailand with 30 points is very good for me."*

Mikhail Grachev (2<sup>nd</sup> in Race 2): *"Nothing went as planned, as I was hit from the back during the first lap in Race 1 and got the car damaged. I had to pit for repairs and the guys worked well. The car was fit enough for Race 2 but I had not enough pace to keep the advantage of pole position. It was useless to try keeping James at bay and preferred to take no risk. Under the circumstances, finishing second is almost like a win."*

Gianni Morbidelli (3<sup>rd</sup> in Race 1): *"Race 1 went well, but there was no way to keep the pace of the Bamboo cars. I lost second to Nash because a little mistake, I hit a kerb and went wide. My biggest concern was the water temperature and I was trying to get fresh air with different lines, but the temperature kept going higher and that was making me nervous. Things went worse in Race 2, as I lost completely the car in turn 8 during the first lap. I have no idea of what happened, maybe something got bent in a small earlier contact, the car just went into the barriers without any notice or anything I could do. I am sorry for the mechanics, as they will have some work to do..."*

Dušan Borković (3<sup>rd</sup> in Race 2): *"This is the first event of the year where we definitely did not have the pace of the front-runners, and still, we got a podium finish... In Race 1, my tyres were immediately killed after a couple of contacts in lap 1. Race 2 was clearly livelier, with a great fight with quite a few other guys. I enjoyed it very much and I think it was a great show for anyone watching..."*

## **TCR Thailand – Newcomer Kusiri wins all at Buriram**

TCR Thailand newcomer Kanthadee Kusiri emerged as the dominator of the series in the event that was run together with the TCR International Series at Chang International Circuit.

For the first time at the wheel of the Team Eakie BBR Kaiten Honda Civic, Kusiri proved to be quick enough to compete on equal footing with the international stars. After qualifying a brilliant eighth overall, he finished both races in the points: sixth in Race 1 ahead of Borković and ninth in Race 2.



He was particularly good in the second race, when he was even fighting for the overall podium positions before falling behind more experienced drivers.

*“Sixth and ninth in my first TCR event and at my home racetrack! I couldn’t be happier! I think I did quite well and it was great fun to be able to fight with all these great international drivers, especially in Race 2, which was really exciting. And obviously I am also very proud that I won the two races for TCR Thailand on my first appearance in the championship,”* a delighted Kusiri said.

In Race 1, Narasak Ittiritpong (Vattana Motorsport Honda Civic) and Alexander Mies (Krating Daeng Racing Team SEAT León) finished in second and third.

Mies climbed up to second at the end of Race 2, while the third place went to Jack Lemvard (Vattana Motorsport SEAT León) who managed to recover to 13<sup>th</sup> overall after he started from the back of the grid.

However, Lemvard was then given a 30-second time penalty for overtaking under yellow flags, which handed the third place to Grant Supaphongs (Krating Daeng Racing Team SEAT León) who moved up to third in the standings, 15 points behind Carlo van Dam.

The series will resume at Pattaya on September 10 and 11.

## TCR International Series - Race 1 OFFICIAL RESULT

**26 - 28 August 2016**  
**Buriram - 4554 mtr.**

Pos	Nbr	Name / Entrant	Car	Cls	PIC	Gap	Total time	Fastest	In	Avg. Speed
1	74	Pepe Oriola Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		1	-- 14 laps --	24:32.596	1:44.533	5	155.86
2	54	James Nash Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		2	1.280	24:33.876	1:44.537	5	155.72
3	10	Gianni Morbidelli West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR		3	2.410	24:35.006	1:44.528	5	155.60
4	1	Stefano Comini Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		4	6.633	24:39.229	1:44.901	4	155.16
5	2	Jean-Karl Vernay Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		5	7.467	24:40.063	1:44.954	5	155.07
6	15	Kantadhee Kusiri Eakie BBR Kaiten	Honda Civic TCR	T	1	11.551	24:44.147	1:45.278	4	154.64
7	62	Dušan Borković B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR		6	14.115	24:46.711	1:45.501	11	154.38
8	9	Attila Tassi B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR		7	20.302	24:52.898	1:45.407	6	153.74
9	77	Sergey Afanasyev Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		8	22.446	24:55.042	1:45.552	5	153.52
10	7	Davit Kajaia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		9	23.892	24:56.488	1:45.339	3	153.37
11	13	Narasak Ittiritpong Vattana Motorsport	Honda Civic TCR	T	2	26.081	24:58.677	1:45.614	4	153.14
12	55	Munkong Sathienthirakul Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		10	27.340	24:59.936	1:45.850	8	153.02
13	12	Alexander Mies Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	3	38.790	25:11.386	1:46.734	4	151.86
14	35	Rafaël Galiana West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR		11	44.808	25:17.404	1:46.491	7	151.25
15	58	Chen Jian Hong Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	4	52.168	25:24.764	1:46.956	5	150.52
16	66	Nattachak Hanjitsasen TBN MK ihere Racing Team	Honda Civic TCR	T	5	52.444	25:25.040	1:47.308	8	150.50
17	53	Kari-Pekka Laaksonen LMS Racing	SEAT León Cup Racer		12	53.234	25:25.830	1:46.734	7	150.42
18	97	Paritat Bulbon Sloth Racing	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	6	58.293	25:30.889	1:46.684	5	149.92
19	11	Grant Supaphongs Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	7	1:23.558	25:56.154	1:46.355	3	147.49
20	22	Petr Fulín Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR		13	-- 12 laps --	21:18.292	1:45.601	3	153.90
21	8	Mikhail Grachev West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR		14	-- 11 laps --	25:06.702	1:45.970	4	119.69
NOT CLASSIFIED			Classification Limit (75% of 14 laps) = 10 laps							
DNC	32	Luigi Ferrara Top Run Motorsport	Subaru WRX STi TCR			8 laps	14:30.826	1:47.331	3	150.61
DNC	70	Mat'ó Homola B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR			5 laps	10:06.599	1:45.502	3	135.13
DNC	44	Jack Lemvard Vattana Motorsport	SEAT León Cup Racer	T		1 laps	3:38.230			75.12


Fastest time : 1:44.528 in lap 5 by nbr. 10 : Gianni Morbidelli (Honda Civic TCR)

**Publication-time**

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

Timekeeping by : TimeService.nl

Time Printed : 13:43

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## TCR International Series - Race 2 OFFICIAL RESULT

26 - 28 August 2016  
Buriram - 4554 mtr.

Pos	Nbr	Name / Entrant	Car	Cls	PIC	Gap	Total time	Fastest	In	Avg. Speed
1	54	James Nash Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		1	-- 16 laps --	30:31.095	1:44.251	6	143.25
2	8	Mikhail Grachev West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR		2	7.272	30:38.367	1:45.296	10	142.68
3	62	Dušan Borković B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR		3	11.332	30:42.427	1:45.228	5	142.37
4	1	Stefano Comini Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		4	12.122	30:43.217	1:45.016	7	142.31
5	7	Davit Kajaia Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		5	15.181	30:46.276	1:45.114	5	142.07
6	9	Attila Tassi B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR		6	18.516	30:49.611	1:45.152	5	141.81
7	77	Sergey Afanasyev Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		7	18.753	30:49.848	1:45.271	5	141.80
8	2	Jean-Karl Vernay Leopard Racing	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		8	19.870	30:50.965	1:45.001	9	141.71
9	15	Kantadhee Kusiri Eakie BBR Kaiten	Honda Civic TCR	T	1	20.208	30:51.303	1:44.844	7	141.68
10	70	Mat'ó Homola B3 Racing Team Hungary	SEAT León TCR		9	20.538	30:51.633	1:44.859	8	141.66
11	74	Pepe Oriola Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León TCR		10	23.276	30:54.371	1:45.134	5	141.45
12	12	Alexander Mies Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	2	27.736	30:58.831	1:45.964	5	141.11
13	53	Kari-Pekka Laaksonen LMS Racing	SEAT León Cup Racer		11	34.406	31:05.501	1:46.282	12	140.61
14	11	Grant Supaphongs Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	3	39.262	31:10.357	1:46.816	13	140.24
15	58	Chen Jian Hong Kratingdaeng Racing Team	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	4	46.479	31:17.574	1:46.917	6	139.70
16	97	Paritat Bulbon Sloth Racing	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	5	55.815	31:26.910	1:46.358	7	139.01
17	44	Jack Lemvard Vattana Motorsport	SEAT León Cup Racer	T	6	1:03.520	31:34.615	1:45.928	13	138.45
18	13	Narasak Ittiritpong Vattana Motorsport	Honda Civic TCR	T	7	-- 14 laps --	27:29.429	1:45.670	5	139.15
19	55	Munkong Sathienthirakul Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR		12	-- 13 laps --	25:59.374	1:44.870	6	136.67
20	35	Rafaël Galiana West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR		13	-- 12 laps --	27:27.420	1:46.549	4	119.41

NOT CLASSIFIED Classification Limit (75% of 16 laps) = 12 laps

DNC	66	Nattachak Hanjitkasen TBN MK ihere Racing Team	Honda Civic TCR	T		6 laps	13:16.378	1:46.460	5	123.51
DNC	10	Gianni Morbidelli West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR			laps				
DNS	22	Petr Fulín Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR			-1 laps				
DNS	32	Luigi Ferrara Top Run Motorsport	Subaru WRX STi TCR			-1 laps				

#No.44 - Drive through penalty applied +30 seconds. Steward decision 7.

#No.55 - Drive through penalty applied +30 seconds. Steward decision 8.

Fastest time : 1:44.251 in lap 6 by nbr. 54 : James Nash (SEAT León TCR)				<b>Publication-time</b>	
Results and Laptimes : <a href="http://www.raceresults.nu">www.raceresults.nu</a>			Timekeeping by : TimeService.nl		Time Printed : 16:34
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					<b>Chang INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT</b>
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