



11 June 2017

## **Rounds 9 & 10 – Salzburgring – 10 / 11 June 2017**

### **RACE REPORT**

#### **Borković and Colciago shares the honours in Austria Comini takes the lead in the standings**

This year's Austrian weekend of the TCR International Series will be mostly remembered for the crashes at Turn 9 that wrecked four cars and, in the case of Jean-Karl Vernay's incident, shook up the standings. In fact, the French driver lost the series' lead and dropped to third behind both the new leader Stefano Comini and Roberto Colciago.

Even worse, the Leopard Racing team has the arduous task of rebuilding two cars (Vernay's and Rob Huff's) in the few days before Friday's free practice at the Hungaroring. The good news is that these high-speed crashes proved how safe the TCR cars are, as all four drivers escaped unhurt apart for a bruise to Huff's left elbow.

Dušan Borković claimed an authoritative win in Race 1, as did Roberto Colciago in Race 2. Mat'ò Homola celebrated his and Opel's first podium in the International Series (second in Race 1).

The other podium finishers were also happy: Attila Tassi (second in Race 2) could not have hoped for such a result after his destructive incident on Friday, but he was rescued by the combined efforts of M1RA and JAS that 'materialized' a second car for him; Comini put in his usual show, a mix of attack and defence that was worth two third places and the leadership in the points.

Another driver who had reasons to rejoice was Jens Reno Møller, who scored in both races, fighting on equal terms against far more experienced competitors.

The series will resume next week at Budapest's Hungaroring for rounds 11 and 12.

#### **Results remain provisional pending an appeal.**

The Lukoil Craft-Bamboo team lodged a protest against four cars (the Alfa Romeos of Kajaia and Borković and the Opels of Homola and Jäger), requesting technical checks of their turbochargers.

Following the report of the Technical Delegate, the Stewards of the Meeting rejected the protest, but Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Team has decided to appeal.

#### **Race 1 – Borković wins, as Leopard duo crash out**

Dušan Borković took a light-to-flag victory - the second for him and the third for GE-Force and the Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR - in a race that turned to drama for Leopard Racing, as both Rob Huff and Jean-Karl Vernay crashed at high speed at the infamous Turn 9. Luckily both drivers escaped shocked, but unhurt.

The result was decided by the two perfect sprints that Borković performed at the start and the re-start after the first safety-car period. In both cases the Serbian was able to keep at bay the pole-sitter Mat'ò Homola and his Opel Astra.



As Homola was forced to concentrate on defending his second position, first from Pepe Oriola and in the final stages from Stefano Comini, Borković created a small gap for the lead.

Behind him, Homola eventually managed to retain second place, while Comini moved up to third in his Audi RS3 LMS overtaking the SEAT cars of Oriola and James Nash. Just before the second safety car intervention, local driver Thomas Jäger managed to overtake Oriola and Nash as well to grab a brilliant fourth.

Jens Reno Møller completed a spotless race, finishing as the best of the Honda drivers in an impressive eighth position.

With Vernay off (and sidelined for the rest of the event) and Roberto Colciago scoreless following a collision with Daniel Lloyd, Comini took advantage of the situation, moving to second in the standings, only three points behind Vernay.

#### Key facts

Grid – Tassi and Huff are both demoted (from 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>) to the back of the grid due to engine changes; Colciago was also dropped (from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>) because of a penalty received in Monza

Start – Borković has better reflexes than Homola and takes the lead ahead of the pole sitter, Oriola, Nash and Jäger

Lap 1 – Møller and Colciago overtake Lloyd and Morbidelli for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>

Lap 2 – Oriola and Nash are chasing Homola

Lap 3 – Comini overtakes Jäger for 5<sup>th</sup>

Lap 4 – Huff (17<sup>th</sup>) and Vernay (15<sup>th</sup>) try to recover

Lap 5 – Homola defends his second place from Oriola, Nash and Comini

Lap 6 – Vernay overtakes Morbidelli for 13<sup>th</sup>; Kajaia overtakes Jäger for 6<sup>th</sup>

Lap 7 – Paulsen retires after a clash with Morbidelli

Lap 8 – Comini overtakes Nash for 4<sup>th</sup>; Colciago and Lloyd make contact

Lap 9 – Comini pips Oriola for third; Vesnić and Ende make contact at the first chicane, the former remain stranded in the gravel, the latter loses a front wheel; Huff crashes at high speed at Turn 9, the safety car is deployed

Lap 12 – The race resumes; the leading quartet of Borković, Homola, Comini and Oriola is covered by only one second; Jäger overtakes Nash for 4<sup>th</sup>

13 – Jäger overtakes Oriola for third

14 – Vernay crashes just a few hundred metres before the spot of Huff's incident; the safety car is deployed again

15 – The race is red-flagged, Borković wins from Homola, Comini and Jäger

## Race 2 – Colciago and Tassi make 1-2 for M1RA

Roberto Colciago and Attila Tassi finished first and second, ending in glory a weekend that had started in the worst way for M1RA and Honda after Tassi's crash in Friday's free practice.

While Colciago dashed from pole position and escaped on the way to his third victory of the season, Tassi made a great start as well, jumping to fourth; then he was able to overtake James Nash and Gianni Morbidelli to grab the second position that he defended until the end despite pressure from Stefano Comini.



The winner of Race 1 Dušan Borković ended up in the gravel – maybe due to a broken driveshaft – and so did Pepe Oriola, while a few other drivers (Kajaia, Demoustier, Bettera) had flat tyres because of debris on the track.

Thomas Jäger encored his fourth place and Jens Reno Møller scored again; Gianni Morbidelli was classified fifth, the best result for him and WestCoast Racing so far.

#### Key facts

Grid – Both the Leopard Racing Volkswagen cars of Vernay and Huff are missing after their shunts in Race 1; Paulsen starts from the pit lane, Vesnić doesn't start as a rear wheel was locked after his Race 1 incident

Start – Colciago sprints from the pole, Morbidelli struggles to keep second place

Lap 1 – Tassi overtakes Nash for third

Lap 2 – Tassi and Morbidelli make contact and swap positions a couple of times; Paulsen pits and rejoins

Lap 3 – Tassi overtakes Morbidelli for second

Lap 4 – Morbidelli drops to fifth behind Comini and Oriola

Lap 5 – Kajaia and Jäger make contact while fighting for 8<sup>th</sup> position; the both overtake Homola for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

Lap 6 – Borković goes off into the gravel trap at Turn 9; Paulsen pits again

Lap 9 – Tassi's second place is under attacks from Comini and Oriola; Morbidelli, Nash and Jäger fight for 5<sup>th</sup> position; Bettera and Ende pit with flat tyres, only the Italian rejoins

Lap 10 – Jäger overtakes Nash for 6<sup>th</sup>

Lap 11 – Jäger overtakes Morbidelli for 5<sup>th</sup>; Oriola spins off into the gravel trap at T9, the safety car is deployed; Demoustier pits with a flat tyre

Lap 12 – Vervisch pits with oil pressure problems

Lap 15 – The race resumes; Kajaia pits and rejoins; Homola takes the --- at the first chicane and drops to 10<sup>th</sup>

Lap 17 – Colciago wins from Tassi; Comini retains second place despite the pressure from Jäger

### **Quotes from the podium finishers**

Dušan Borković (1<sup>st</sup> Race 1): *“When you win a race, the question is always asked ‘you made it look easy’ but it really wasn't easy. I knew I had to get a good start, as it would have been very tough to overtake Mat'o if he got a better start than me. I was scared that he would overtake me in the second sector with the slipstream but he didn't manage to do it. Same with the safety car, but I managed again to have the inside line. The second race was disappointing because I had a problem with a driveshaft after Jäger twice pushed me wide at the chicane. Comini did a great job, but he will have the most Success Ballast next week.”*

Roberto Colciago (1<sup>st</sup> Race 2): *“I had a good first race, but I was pushed out by someone else. In Race 2, I had a good start and then Attila was fighting with Comini – I was looking in the mirror and saying ‘thanks’! That was really the key to my win. In this championship, in every race you can say it's me and Comini or me and someone else or Comini and someone else; there are so many fast drivers and the ballast changes. Today I was lucky with the ballast, unlike in Spa. Every race is a story. To talk about the championship, we have to wait until the end.”*



Mat'o Homola (2<sup>nd</sup> Race 1): *"I scored more points this weekend than in all the previous races together! For sure, I wanted to win the first race but Dušan had a really good start. I almost overtook him twice, but the second time I didn't want to take any major risk because the points are so important for me. It wasn't easy to keep Stefano behind me, but he had a puncture and that helped me. After the safety car, I got a slipstream from Dušan towards the end of the race, so I was lucky for that. I'm sorry for all the drivers who crashed at Turn 9 over the weekend – I'm really pleased that they're all okay."*

Attila Tassi (2<sup>nd</sup> Race 2): *"After the crash on Friday, we weren't even sure that we could take part in Qualifying or the races, so I want to say a huge thanks to my family, to the team and to JAS for the fast delivery of the brand new car. It's a great result for me and for the team and I'm very happy. For the first few laps as I went through Turn 9, it wasn't scary but I was building up the speed again. If I was scared, I wouldn't have got back in the car. Hungary is the home race for me and the team and I've been waiting all season for it, so my aim is to have my first win in TCR there."*

Stefano Comini (3<sup>rd</sup> in both races): *"This was not a bad weekend for me at all. It's like a game of roulette here in Salzburgring, because every session it's different. You need to have big respect for Turn 9 because a lot of drivers crashed there. It's amazing what TCR has done with the cars because they were scary crashes but here is 'Attilino' finishing second after a big crash. It's good to know that we are working with safe cars. I don't actually remember much about the races, only that some overtaking moves were good and that I had a puncture! If you want to overtake here, you have to take risks so you can defend quite easily. After only two and a half months, we are leading the championship with a new team, a new car and a last-minute project."*

## **Opera and rock singers entertain the public**

The spectators and guests who came to the Salzburgring on Sunday were invited to enter onto the grid before the start of Race 1 and after the end of Race 2 to attend a variety of promotional activities.

After all the cars had been placed on the grid for Race 1, the gates were opened while the rock band Aber Hallo welcomed the public with a live performance.

The speaker then called up the drivers one-by-one and presented them to the public, and afterwards mezzo-soprano Reinhild Buchmayer of the Semperoper Bremen sang the Austrian National Anthem to end the pre-race presentation.

After the end of the second race, the spectators were allowed onto the track once again to attend the podium ceremonies. A one-hour live concert of Aber Hallo concluded the event.



**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 International Circuit, China (with TCR Asia & TCR China)

26 November – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi (F1 event)









