

11 April 2015

Rounds 3 & 4 – Shanghai, China – 11/12 April 2015

SATURDAY REPORT

Race 1 – Morbidelli wins and takes point lead

WestCoast Racing took no prisoners in Race 1 at Shanghai, posting a sensational 1-2-3, thanks to the excellent speed of the Honda Civic cars on the long straights of the Chinese circuit.

Gianni Morbidelli added a first TCR win to his long string of successes in international touring cars, leading the race from lights to flag, closely followed by team-mate René Münnich. With this success and the pole position obtained earlier, the Italian is now leading in the Drivers' standings, by 5 points.

Kevin Gleason came in third, completing the all-Civic podium, but the American had to battle hard to conquer his first TCR podium, swapping positions many times with previous championship leader Stefano Comini, who eventually took fourth and was the first of the SEAT cars. The Gleason vs Comini was not the only exciting duel of the race: Chinese fans could also enjoy close battle for fifth, as Mikhail Grachev's Audi TT went under attack from Jordi Gené and later, Andrea Belicchi. The Russian, who put on a solid race, managed to keep the Spaniard at bay but was pipped by the Italian in the last corner.

Pepe Oriola had taken a great start and was running second, but was forced to retire at the end of lap 1 after suffering a puncture and body damage following a clash with Münnich.

Key moments

Start – Morbidelli sprints from pole position; Oriola jumps to second ahead of Münnich

Lap 1 – Oriola and Münnich make contact; the former slows down and retires

Lap 2 – Comini and Gleason overtake Grachev for third and fourth

Lap 3 – Gleason and Comini swap places twice

Lap 4 – Gené overtakes Tóth for sixth

Lap 6 – Belicchi overtakes Tóth for seventh

Lap 7 – Comini and Gleason continue to swap places; Grachev and Gené collide, Gené loses a couple of positions

Lap 8 – Engstler overtakes Gené for seventh

Lap 9 – Gleason manages to keep Comini at bay for third; Belicchi chases Grachev

Lap 10 – Belicchi passes Grachev for fifth at the last turn

Race 1 – Quotes from the podium finishers

Gianni Morbidelli, winner: *"It was simply a perfect day, I must reckon. Everything was perfect and the car performed extremely well. I congratulate WestCoast Racing for the very good work. It is clear that here in Shanghai the Honda cars were above the competition, as it was the case for SEAT in Sepang. We felt at ease since the beginning of free practice and could materialize the good work. We'll try to carry on the momentum, knowing very well that it will be difficult to always have a day like today."*

René Münnich, second: *"It's nice to be on the podium, I am happy to have been behind Gianni throughout the entire weekend so far. In the race, I could almost follow his pace and in the last couple of laps I even reduced the gap, although I think he lifted off a bit."*

Kevin Gleason, third: *"I believe Stefano Comini and I put the show today! It was good a good fight, always very close. He was weaving in excess on the straights, but all in all, it was fair. I hope the fans enjoyed it and I think they will need to get used to that sort of show in the TCR! Again, my start was quite poor, I really need to improve that."*

Thirty-second time penalty for Mikhail Grachev

Mikhail Grachev saw his Race 1 efforts vanished by a penalty he was given by the Stewards of the Meeting.

The Russian driver had finished the race in sixth position at the wheel of his Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi TT, showing the potential of the German car. During the race Grachev was involved in exciting battles with Jordi Gené and Andrea Belicchi; on lap seven him and Gené made contact at the last turn, which cost the Spaniard a couple of positions.

The Stewards deemed Grachev guilty for causing the collision and imposed him a drive-through that resulted in a post-race 30-second time penalty, which dropped him from sixth to 14th.

Bernie Ecclestone enjoys the TCR!

Once again Bernie Ecclestone showed his interest for the TCR International Series.

After visiting the TCR paddock in Sepang, this time the Formula 1 supremo showed up on the grid for today's Race 1, where he was welcomed by TCR promoter Marcello Lotti.

Ecclestone met a delegation of the Macau Grand Prix Committee and then walked through the first rows of the grid, stopping by his old acquaintance and former F1 driver Gianni Morbidelli, whom he wished well.

The greeting proved effective, as Gianni took a superb win!

Morbidelli led Honda 1-2-3 in Shanghai qualifying

The Honda Civic dominated today's qualifying session at Shanghai, where the WestCoast Racing cars of Gianni Morbidelli, René Münnich and Kevin Gleason posted the three fastest laps in Q2.

Liqui Moly Team Engstler's Mikhail Grachev gave the Audi TT a brilliant fourth position on the grid for Race 1, followed by the best of the SEAT drivers: Pepe Oriola in fifth and Hungarian teenager Norbert Tóth in sixth.

Andrea Belicchi and Michel Nykjær qualified in tenth and ninth positions respectively, that will grant them the front row in the starting grid for tomorrow's Race 2.

Craft-Bamboo Lukoil's Jordi Gené and Sergey Afanasyev were both eliminated after Q1.

Morbidelli said: *"I am very happy, everything went beyond expectations. I thought we would be in the mid-2.16 but was not expecting to be seventh faster than that. The car was very well-balanced and I had a lot of grip. I saved the new tyres for today and everything went well."*



Race 1 Classification after 10 Laps - 54.320 Kms

| POS | NO | DRIVER | NAT | ENTRANT | LAPS | TIME | GAP | KPH | BEST | LAP | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|---------|----------|----------|---|
| 1 | 10 | G. MORBIDELLI | ITA | Honda Civic TCR | 10 | 23:18.758 | | 139.804 | 2:17.363 | 3 | |
| 2 | 23 | R. MUENNICH | GER | Honda Civic TCR | 10 | 23:19.609 | 0.851 | 2.916 | 139.719 | 2:17.783 | 3 |
| 3 | 24 | K. GLEASON | USA | Honda Civic TCR | 10 | 23:22.525 | 3.767 | 1.743 | 139.428 | 2:18.323 | 2 |
| 4 | 25 | S. COMINI | SUI | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:24.268 | 5.510 | 2.032 | 139.255 | 2:18.586 | 2 |
| 5 | 33 | A. BELICCHI | ITA | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:26.300 | 7.542 | 2.172 | 139.054 | 2:18.637 | 3 |
| 6 | 6 | F. ENGSTLER | GER | Audi TT | 10 | 23:28.472 | 9.714 | 1.108 | 138.839 | 2:19.139 | 3 |
| 7 | 88 | J. GENE | ESP | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:29.580 | 10.822 | 0.671 | 138.730 | 2:18.444 | 3 |
| 8 | 47 | N. TOTH | HUN | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:30.251 | 11.493 | 0.849 | 138.664 | 2:18.817 | 2 |
| 9 | 17 | M. NYKJAER | DEN | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:31.100 | 12.342 | 2.724 | 138.581 | 2:19.151 | 3 |
| 10 | 77 | S. AFANASYEV | RUS | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:33.824 | 15.066 | 0.646 | 138.314 | 2:18.703 | 3 |
| 11 | 7 | L. VEGLIA | ITA | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:34.470 | 15.712 | 3.427 | 138.251 | 2:19.898 | 5 |
| 12 | 5 | J. TENGYI | CHN | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:37.897 | 19.139 | 13.850 | 137.916 | 2:19.737 | 2 |
| 13 | 20 | I. SKUZ | UKR | SEAT Leon Racer | 10 | 23:51.747 | 32.989 | 5.062 | 136.582 | 2:20.546 | 5 |
| 14 | 8 | M. GRACHEV * | RUS | Audi TT | 10 | 23:56.809 | 38.051 | | 136.101 | 2:19.154 | 4 |
| NOT CLASSIFIED | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 74 | P. ORIOLA | ESP | SEAT Leon Racer | 1 | 2:26.738 | DNF | | 129.070 | | | |
| FASTEST LAP | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | G. MORBIDELLI | ITA | Honda Civic TCR | | 2:17.363 on lap 3 | | | 142.859 | | | |

PENALTIES

* Car 8 - 30 second time penalty - Causing a collision and gaining an advantage - Stewards' decision no. 1

Timekeeper:

A Support Event Race to the 2015 FORMULA 1 CHINESE GRAND PRIX - Shanghai

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2015 TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES - DRIVERS' CLASSIFICATION

| position | driver | Sepang MALAYSIA 29 March | | | Shanghai Jiading CHINA 12 April | | | Valencia SPAIN 3 May | | | Portimão PORTUGAL 10 May | | | Monza ITALY 24 May | | | Salzburgering AUSTRIA 31 May | | | Sochi RUSSIA 21 June | | | Buenos Aires ARGENTINA 26 July | | | Marina Bay SINGAPORE 20 September | | | Buriram THAILAND 25 October | | | TBA TBA 22 November | | | TOTAL |
|----------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----|----|---------------------------------------|----|----|----------------------------|----|----|--------------------------------|----|----|--------------------------|----|----|------------------------------------|----|----|----------------------------|----|----|--------------------------------------|----|----|---|----|----|-----------------------------------|----|----|---------------------------|--|--|-------|
| | | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | | | | |
| 1 | Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) | 0 | 12 | 15 | 5 | 25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 57 | | | |
| 2 | Sefano Comini (SUI) | 3 | 25 | 12 | 0 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 52 | | | |
| 3 | Jordi Gené (ESP) | 0 | 6 | 25 | 0 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 37 | | | |
| 4 | Pepe Oriola (ESP) | 0 | 18 | 18 | 1 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 37 | | | |
| 5 | Kevin Gleason (USA) | 5 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 37 | | | |
| 6 | Andrea Belicchi (ITA) | 4 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 34 | | | |
| 7 | René Münnich (GER) | 1 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 18 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 31 | | | |
| 8 | Sergey Afanasyev (RUS) | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 16 | | | |
| 9 | Franz Engstler (GER) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | | | |
| 10 | Michel Nykjær (DEN) | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 6 | | | |
| 11 | Mikhail Grachev (RUS) | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 6 | | | |
| 12 | Norbert Tóth (HUN) | - | - | - | 0 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | | | |
| 13 | Ferenc Ficza (HUN) | 0 | 2 | 1 | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| 14 | Frank Yu (HKG) | 0 | 0 | 2 | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| 15 | Lorenzo Veglia (ITA) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |

2015 TCR INTERNATIONAL SERIES - TEAMS' CLASSIFICATION

| position | team | Sepang MALAYSIA 29 March | | | Shanghai Jiading CHINA 12 April | | | Valencia SPAIN 3 May | | | Portimão PORTUGAL 10 May | | | Monza ITALY 24 May | | | Salzburgring AUSTRIA 31 May | | | Sochi RUSSIA 21 June | | | Buenos Aires ARGENTINA 26 July | | | Marina Bay SINGAPORE 20 September | | | Buriram THAILAND 25 October | | | TBA TBA 22 November | | | TOTAL |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----|----|---------------------------------------|----|----|----------------------------|----|----|--------------------------------|----|----|--------------------------|----|----|-----------------------------------|----|----|----------------------------|----|----|--------------------------------------|----|----|---|----|----|-----------------------------------|----|----|---------------------------|-----|--|-------|
| | | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | Q | R1 | R2 | | | | |
| 1 | West Coast Racing | 6 | 20 | 23 | 9 | 43 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 101 | | |
| 2 | Target Competition | 7 | 35 | 22 | 0 | 27 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 91 | | |
| 3 | Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil | 0 | 33 | 43 | 2 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 90 | | |
| 4 | Liqui Moly Team Engstler | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 29 | | |
| 5 | Zengö Motorsport | 0 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 17 | | |
| 6 | Campos Racing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |