

12 April 2015

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

SUNDAY REPORT

Race 2 – Belicchi takes maiden victory

The SEAT León cars took their revenge in a thrilling and very entertaining Race 2 today at Shanghai, with Andrea Belicchi conquering his maiden TCR win after an intense and beautiful fight with team mate Stefano Comini (signing a 1-2 for Target Competition) and yesterday's winner Gianni Morbidelli, at the wheel of the WestCoast Racing Honda Civic. With a brilliant start, Comini took an early lead ahead of Belicchi, before both being passed by Morbidelli charging from the back in lap 6, not without a slight contact between the Italian and the Swiss, which Belicchi used to take the lead. It looked as 'Morbido' was on his way to a second triumph but his engine switched off briefly two laps later leaving him in fourth. The Honda could pass Oriola and also Comini, but two corners from the end, the Swiss regained second with a great move.

It was a close and hardly-fought race at all levels of the ranking, with Oriola finishing fourth ahead of Nykjær, Gleason and Engstler.

In the championship, Morbidelli is leading by a mere 2-point advantage on Comini, with Belicchi third 13 points from the top.

The TCR International Series will resume for Rounds 5 & 6 at Valencia, Spain, on May 3rd.

Key moments

Start – Belicchi takes a good start from pole, while Comini and Oriola jump ahead of Nykjær

Lap 1 – Münnich skids and drops to the back; Comini overtakes Belicchi and takes the lead

Lap 2 – Morbidelli climbs to fourth passing Engstler and Nykjær

Lap 3 – Grachev and Tóth make contact while fighting for seventh, Grachev stops onto the gravel trap; Oriola overtakes Belicchi for second; Engstler overtakes Nykjær for fifth

Lap 4 – Belicchi retakes second from Oriola; Oriola loses third to Morbidelli

Lap 5 – Morbidelli overtakes Belicchi for second; Engstler drives wide at the last turn

Lap 6 – Morbidelli hits the back of Comini's car and takes the lead; Comini drops to third; Veglia and Gleason have a close fight for eighth

Lap 7 – Nykjær overtakes Engstler for fifth

Lap 8 – Morbidelli slows down and drops to fourth behind Belicchi, Comini and Oriola

Lap 9 – Münnich hits Afanasyev sending him sideways and making also contact with Tóth, while Veglia secures eighth

Lap 10 – the fight between Morbidelli and Comini provide the last thrills: Morbidelli overtakes Comini who retakes the position with a great manoeuvre on the last-but-one turn

Race 2 – Quotes from the podium finishers

Andrea Belicchi, winner: *"I am very proud to win such a close race, where we had great fighting, always fair-play. It's a lot of fun to be back to touring car racing. After almost twenty years of absence, it is clear that I still need to adjust and get used to front-wheel drive and a different racing style. It's coming together, although I still need to improve starts and first laps. The TCR was a last-minute choice for me, but I really rejoice to have made it and I think we will have a great season. I am also very happy to be with a team such as Target competition, who does a wonderful job and has helped me a lot readapting to touring car machinery."*

Stefano Comini, second: *"It hasn't been an easy weekend for the SEAT cars, as we were clearly disadvantaged in the long straights, so it's nice to end the weekend with a 1-2 win. In my case, I had also the extra-handicap of the 30-kg success ballast, which penalized me a lot in qualifying. But today's race was a lot of fun, with a lot of fights, which is what I enjoy. The car was simply perfect."*

Gianni Morbidelli, third: *"If yesterday was a perfect day, today proved that nothing is granted in motor racing. Shortly after taking the lead, by mid-race, my engine switched off for a brief moment, and I lost three positions. I was lucky to reconquer third and still keep the championship lead. I am sure fans enjoyed today's show and that the race proves how exciting and closely-fought the season is going to be."*

Young fighter Lorenzo Veglia is "Man of the Race"

Liqui Moly Team Engstler "young gun" Lorenzo Veglia has been elected "Man of the Race" by the special jury awarding this honorific recognition.

Showing constant progress, the 17-year-old from Turin has put in an impressive Race 2, battling throughout the whole ten laps, in particular with Kevin Gleason and Sergey Afanasyev with whom he swapped positions many times, with immaculate fair-play.

Veglia was clearly satisfied with his weekend: *"We are progressing a lot with the car set-up, as proven by the closing gaps in all sessions. In Race 1, I struggled with the toe-in after a contact on the opening lap, but in Race 2 I was quite competitive and had fun fighting with all these guys from start to finish!"*

Münnich is dropped by one position in Race 2

Today's second TCR race at Shanghai was not as lucky as yesterday's Race 1 for René Münnich.

After finishing a brilliant second behind his WestCoast Racing team-mate Gianni Morbidelli in the first race, today the German driver spoiled his chances when his Honda Civic got into a skid during the first lap.

This dropped him to the back of the field and, while trying to recover, Münnich was involved in a close fight with Sergey Afanasyev, Tengyi Jiang and Norbert Tóth.

Eventually, on the last-but-one lap, Münnich punted Afanasyev into a spin, which involved Tóth as well. The Stewards of the Meeting deemed Münnich guilty for the incident and imposed a 30-second time penalty that dropped him from 13th to 14th.



Race 2 Classification after 10 Laps - 54.320 Kms

POS	NO	DRIVER	NAT	ENTRANT	LAPS	TIME	GAP	KPH	BEST	LAP	
1	33	A. BELICCHI	ITA	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:19.292		139.750	2:18.502	4	
2	25	S. COMINI	SUI	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:20.544	1.252	0.248	139.625	2:18.476	3
3	10	G. MORBIDELLI	ITA	Honda Civic TCR	10	23:20.792	1.500	2.321	139.600	2:17.553	3
4	74	P. ORIOLA	ESP	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:23.113	3.821	0.530	139.370	2:18.379	3
5	17	M. NYKJAER	DEN	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:23.643	4.351	2.068	139.317	2:18.595	5
6	24	K. GLEASON	USA	Honda Civic TCR	10	23:25.711	6.419	0.125	139.112	2:18.130	5
7	6	F. ENGSTLER	GER	Audi TT	10	23:25.836	6.544	3.140	139.100	2:18.402	3
8	7	L. VEGLIA	ITA	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:28.976	9.684	1.011	138.790	2:18.777	5
9	5	J. TENGYI	CHN	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:29.987	10.695	2.900	138.690	2:19.100	5
10	88	J. GENE	ESP	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:32.887	13.595	0.242	138.405	2:19.023	3
11	77	S. AFANASYEV	RUS	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:33.129	13.837	0.890	138.382	2:18.658	5
12	47	N. TOTH	HUN	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:34.019	14.727	11.438	138.295	2:19.099	5
13	20	I. SKUZ	UKR	SEAT Leon Racer	10	23:45.457	26.165	19.411	137.185	2:20.136	4
14	23	R. MUENNICH *	GER	Honda Civic TCR	10	24:04.868	45.576		135.342	2:18.504	5
NOT CLASSIFIED											
	8	M. GRACHEV	RUS	Audi TT	2	4:47.923	DNF		133.935	2:20.039	2
FASTEST LAP											
	10	G. MORBIDELLI	ITA	Honda Civic TCR		2:17.553 on lap 3		142.662			

PENALTIES

* Car 23 - 30 second time penalty - Causing a collision - Stewards' decision no. 2

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			Salzburg 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	Q	R1	R2	
1	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	0	12	15	5	25	15				Q						Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2				72
2	Sefano Comini (SUI)	3	25	12	0	12	18																												70
3	Andrea Belicchi (ITA)	4	10	10	0	10	25																												59
4	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	0	18	18	1	0	12																												49
5	Kevin Gleason (USA)	5	8	6	3	15	8																												45
6	Jordi Gené (ESP)	0	6	25	0	6	1																												38
7	René Münnich (GER)	1	0	8	4	18	0																												31
8	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	0	15	0	0	1	0																												16
9	Michel Nykjær (DEN)	0	4	0	0	2	10																												16
10	Franz Engstler (GER)	2	0	0	0	8	6																												16
11	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	0	0	4	2	0	0																												6
12	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA)	0	1	0	0	0	4																												5
13	Norbert Tóth (HUN)	-	-	-	0	4	0																												4
14	Ferenc Ficza (HUN)	0	2	1	-	-	-																												3
15	Frank Yu (HKG)	0	0	2	-	-	-																												2
15	Tengyi Jiang (CHN)	-	-	-	0	0	2																												2

2

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			Salzburg 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	Q	R1	R2	
1	Target Competition	7	35	22	0	27	43										Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2	Q	R1	R2				134
2	WestCoast Racing	6	20	23	9	43	25																												126
3	Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	0	33	43	2	12	16																												106
4	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	2	4	8	3	12	14																												43
5	Zengö Motorsport	0	6	4	1	6	2																												19
6	Campos Racing	0	0	0	0	1	1																												2