

2 May 2015

Rounds 5 & 6 – Valencia, Spain – 2/3 May 2015

QUALIFYING REPORT

Pepe Oriola and SEAT dominate home qualifying

A Spanish driver and the Spanish cars dominated today's qualifying session at Valencia. Pepe Oriola claimed his first pole position for Craft-Bamboo Lukoil, while the SEAT León cars filled the first six spots of the grid with Andrea Belicchi, Stefano Comini, Michel Nykjær, Sergey Afanasyev, and Jordi Gené who qualified from second to sixth.

Franz Engstler's Audi TT was the best of the rest, in seventh position, followed by the Opel Astra of Oscar Nogués that made impressive progress today, significantly reducing the gap from the leading pace.

Former championship leader Gianni Morbidelli, whose Honda Civic car is laden by BoP and success ballast, claimed his qualifying run was also affected by a loss of power and had to settle with ten position that will give him pole position on the top-ten reverse grid for the second race.

Tomorrow's races will start at 12.35 and 14.05 local time, on the distance of 15 laps.

Qualifying 1: Nogués qualifies his Opel Astra for Q2

With a last gasp improvement Sergey Afanasyev set the fastest lap in Q1 (1:42.238), demoting Kevin Gleason to second (1:42.448) by only 10 thousandths of a second.

It was a very close session, with six lead changes and fourteen drivers covered by seven tenths.

The biggest surprise was created by Oscar Nogués who put in a great performance to place his Campos Racing Opel Astra in 12th position (1:43.110), depriving Mikhail Grachev of a trip to Q2 by only 25 thousandths.

Nogués' team mate Jordi Oriola saw his chances vanishing when his Opel Astra suffered from a puncture.

The following drivers advanced to Q2: Afanasyev, Gleason, Comini, Gené, P. Oriola, Belicchi, Engstler, Morbidelli, Nykjær, Cebrián, Schouten and Nogués.

Qualifying 2: Oriola and Belicchi fill the front row

Two timed laps were enough to fix the front positions for the first race's grid. Pepe Oriola clocked the time of 1:42.068 on his first try and immediately improved to 1:42.045 that earned him pole position.



Andrea Belicchi qualified second, less than one tenth behind (1:42.143), ahead of Stefano Comini (1:42.183) and Michel Nykjær (1:42.300).

Gianni Morbidelli ranked tenth (1:42.971) and won pole position for Race 2, while his teammate Kevin Gleason could not post a significant time because of a fuel pick-up issue.

What the drivers had to say

Pepe Oriola, pole sitter: *"I am, of course, very happy of this pole position, because it is my home race and also one of my favorite tracks, together with Macau. It's a great satisfaction to see that we were consistently competitive through both qualifying sessions. The car performs very well and I think we will have an exciting show tomorrow in the races, although tyre consumption may play a key role."*

Andrea Belicchi, qualified 2nd: *"I am favourably surprised to be on the first row, because we had difficult free practice sessions and I wasn't expecting to be so fast in qualifying. It proved that we did a great job in setting up the car. Tomorrow may be a completely different story. I expect a close fight and preserving tyres will be crucial."*

Stefano Comini, qualified 3rd: *"It's a very good result, a little bit unexpected in light of previous sessions. The car was very fast and without a small mistake in my fastest run, I could have done much better. Tomorrow is going to be a tough day, and I am happy to be in a good position on the grid for both races, as here it is difficult to overtake and first corner is often a problem. I trained a lot on a simulator and we will see if that helps."*

President of National Sporting Authority Gracia visits the TCR

On Saturday, the TCR paddock welcomed a distinguished guest: Carlos Gracia, FIA Vice President and President of the RFEA (Real Federación Española de Automovilismo) visited the series and met with Marcello Lotti, CEO of WSC Ltd., and other key people of the series. He obviously took special interest on Spanish drivers and teams, and spent time with Jaime Puig, Director of SEAT Sport.



Balance of Performance was adjusted after Free Practice

The Technical Department of the TCR International Series further revised the Balance of Performance for the event at Valencia's Circuit Ricardo Tormo.

Taking into account the results of the previous race meetings and of today's free practice sessions, it was decided to grant weight breaks of 35 kilos to the Opel Astra OPC cars and of 30 kilos to the Audi TT cars. This means that the Opel's weight is now 1225 kgs as opposed to the 1230 kgs of the Audi, the 1260 kgs of the SEAT León (the only model still running on the minimum weight as it is fixed by the Sporting Regulations) and the 1295 kgs of the Honda Civic, the only car fitted with a racing gearbox.

On top of this the Technical Department also decided to allow the Opel, SEAT and Audi cars to run with a 70-mm ride height, while the Honda cars are staying on 80 mm.

Campos Racing Opel cars in steep progress curve

There were smiles and cheers in the Campos Racing box at the end of Qualifying, as for the first time one of the Opel Astra OPC cars made it to Q2, thanks to Óscar Nogués, who later took a superb eighth position in the final qualifying session.

The result and consistently-improved pace throughout the sessions at Valencia, proved the significant progress made by the German cars after a difficult season debut in Asia.

"We worked a lot since the cars came back from Shanghai", explained Campos Racing team manager Fernando Monje, "There were a number of electronics problems to solve to get the engine working properly. Now that those seem to have been solved, we can start developing the car set-up, which we only achieved here in Valencia, after a shake-down in Barcelona."

Despite being a last-minute addition to the team, Óscar Nogués was able to contribute all his experience and speed to Campos Racing. *"We have been bringing down lap times since the start of the weekend", said the 36-years-old Catalan driver, "despite still having some issues from time to time, like in Q1, when an oil spill provoked a huge smoke cloud in the pits. We feared the engine had blown but luckily it was a very small thing. I was fortunate to make it to Q2, by only 25 thousandths of a second, and in the final 10-minute session, everything went well and I could put on a time that leaves us 8 tenths from the pole."*

This was for sure an unexpected but much-welcomed result, and the perfect boost for the morale of the entire squad, which is based a few kilometres from the circuit. Present in the boxes, team owner Adrián Campos was attending a TCR event for the first time: *"I am very happy", admitted the former F.1 driver, "and I do believe a lot in the TCR concept, which seems particularly suited for the current times. This is why we wanted to be present since the very beginning, although the car clearly needed more time. Opel Motorsport has great plans for the future and we are happy to be associated with them."*



Qualifying OFFICIAL RESULTS

Ord.	Nº	Driver	Nat.	Entrant	Car	Laps	Laps1	BL1	Q1	Laps2	BL2	Q2	Q-Time	Km/h
1	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	10	5	4	1'42.502	5	3	1'42.045	1'42.045	141.291
2	33	Andrea Belicchi	ITA	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	8	4	3	1'42.600	4	2	1'42.143	1'42.143	141.155
3	25	Stefano Comini	SUI	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	9	4	3	1'42.451	5	2	1'42.183	1'42.183	141.100
4	17	Michel Nykjær	DEN	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	11	6	5	1'42.966	5	3	1'42.300	1'42.300	140.938
5	77	Sergey Afanasyev	RUS	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	14	9	8	1'42.438	5	3	1'42.537	1'42.537	140.613
6	88	Jordi Gené	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	10	5	4	1'42.460	5	2	1'42.823	1'42.823	140.222
7	6	Franz Engstler	GER	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	12	8	7	1'42.609	4	3	1'42.837	1'42.837	140.202
8	19	Oscar Nogués Farré	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	11	7	6	1'43.110	4	2	1'42.866	1'42.866	140.163
9	34	Bas Schouten	NED	ST Motorsport / Bas Koeten Racing	SEAT León Racer	16	10	6	1'43.028	6	2	1'42.915	1'42.915	140.096
10	10	Gianni Morbidelli	ITA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	15	9	8	1'42.710	6	4	1'42.971	1'42.971	140.020
11	32	David Cebrián	ESP	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	12	6	4	1'43.014	6	3	1'42.995	1'42.995	139.987
12	24	Kevin Gleason	USA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	10	8	7	1'42.448	2	2	4'52.946	4'52.946	49.217
13	8	Mikhail Grachev	RUS	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	10	10	9	1'43.135				1'43.135	139.797
14	11	Lucile Cypriano	FRA	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	11	11	10	1'43.139				1'43.139	139.792
15	20	Igor Skuz	UKR	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	11	11	9	1'43.498				1'43.498	139.307
16	7	Lorenzo Veglia	ITA	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	SEAT León Racer	11	11	7	1'43.718				1'43.718	139.012
17	21	Jordi Oriola	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	6	6	3	1'44.239				1'44.239	138.317

Circuito de la Comunitat Valenciana on May 02, 2015

At 18:51

STEWARD

STEWARD

STEWARD

TIMEKEEPER





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			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	Sefano Comini (SUI)	3	25	12	0	12	18	3																									73		
2	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	0	12	15	5	25	15	0																									72		
3	Andrea Belicchi (ITA)	4	10	10	0	10	25	4																									63		
4	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	0	18	18	1	0	12	5																									54		
5	Kevin Gleason (USA)	5	8	6	3	15	8	0																									45		
6	Jordi Gené (ESP)	0	6	25	0	6	1	0																									38		
7	René Münnich (GER)	1	0	8	4	18	0	0																									31		
8	Michel Nykjær (DEN)	0	4	0	0	2	10	2																									18		
9	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	0	15	0	0	1	0	1																									17		
10	Franz Engstler (GER)	2	0	0	0	8	6	0																									16		
11	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	0	0	4	2	0	0	0																									6		
12	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA)	0	1	0	0	0	4	0																									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		

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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			Salzburging 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	Target Competition	7	35	22	0	27	43	7																									141		
2	WestCoast Racing	6	20	23	9	43	25	0																									126		
3	Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	0	33	43	2	12	16	7																									113		
4	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	2	4	8	3	12	14	1																									44		
5	Zengő Motorsport	0	6	4	1	6	2	-	-	-																							19		
6	Campos Racing	0	0	0	0	1	1	0																									2		