

3 May 2015

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

RACE REPORT

A perfect weekend for SEAT cars at home

The SEAT cars took clear victories on home soil and Stefano Comini is again the leader in the overall standings. These are the main takeaways of the fifth and sixth rounds of the TCR International Series, which made its European debut at Valencia.

In a warm weekend, the SEAT León cars proved to be the fastest and comfortably won Race-1, which ended with a 1-2-3 for the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil. Local hero Pepe Oriola took his maiden win of the season ahead of team-mates Sergey Afanasyev and Jordi Gené. Race-2 was made very lively from the start by a spectacular accident and the subsequent safety-car period. Stefano Comini made perfect use of the situation, becoming the first driver to claim a second success in the season. It was Target Competition's turn to finish 1-2-3 with Michel Nykjær and Andrea Belicchi behind Comini, while Bas Schouten lost third place on the last lap. The young Dutch rookie was one of the good surprises in Spain.

Belicchi also lost his third place as he excluded for not observing a drive-through penalty. The WestCoast Racing Honda Civic cars struggled throughout the weekend to be on the pace, but Morbidelli inherited third in Race 2 after Belicchi's exclusion. Oscar Nogués helped Campos Racing to make significant progress with the Opel Astra; the Catalan qualified 8th and showed a front-runner pace, but was victim of the accident at the start of Race 2. Same bad luck hit the Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi cars that, after Mikhail Grachev's promising fifth position in Race 1, were involved in a collision on the first lap of Race 2.

The TCR International Series will resume next week, for Round 7 and 8 at Autódromo Internacional Algarve, in Portugal.

Race 1 – Maiden win for Oriola in Craft-Bamboo's 1-2-3

In a warm mid-day Race 1 in Valencia, the Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil took a resounding success, posting a 1-2-3 with Pepe Oriola, Sergey Afanasyev and Jordi Gené in SEAT's home soil. This is also the first TCR win for Pepe Oriola, already one of the top-runners in the Asian rounds that opened the season.

The SEAT León cars of the British-Russian team proved their competitiveness since the practice session, but could pull away even more easily thanks a very bad start of Stefano Comini, who partly blocked the field. Behind the podium positions, Andrea Comini took fourth and Mikahil Grachev an excellent fifth with the Liqui Moly Team Engstler Audi TT.



Stefano Comini came in sixth, followed by team-mate Michel Nykjær. Gianni Morbidelli came in eighth, the first Honda Civic, in a race where the Japanese cars were not at the top. The last two point-scoring positions were for Dutch rookie Bas Schouten and Lorenzo Veglia.

Key moments

Grid – Jordi Oriola did not start with an apparent transmission problem

Start – Pepe Oriola sprinted from the pole, while Comini had a bad start, which forced Gené onto the grass on the inside line

Lap 1 – Oriola was leading ahead of Afanasyev, Gené, Belicchi, Grachev, Comini, Nykjær, Cebrián and Engstler who slipped down following a clash with Belicchi

Lap 2 – Comini passed Grachev for fifth

Lap 3 – Engstler pited for repairs

Lap 4 – Grachev repassed Comini in the hottest duel at this stage of the race

Lap 6 – Behind the top six, Nykjær was chased by Cebrián, Morbidelli, Veglia and Schouten; Nogués, who was running tenth, slowed down

Lap 7 – Cypriano passed Nogués for 14th

Lap 11 – Belicchi closed the gap from Gené

Lap 12 – Gené kept Belicchi at bay

Lap 13 – Schouten passed Veglia for 9th

Lap 15 – The Craft-Bamboo Lukoil team claimed a wonderful 1-2-3

Race 2 – Comini takes win in action-packed race

Stefano Comini was the first driver to win a second TCR race in the inaugural year of the series: the Swiss claimed victory in a drama-packed Race 2 and jumped back on top of the overall standings. He managed beat his team-mate Michel Nykjær, who claimed his first TCR podium, with another Target Competition driver, Andrea Belicchi, crossing the line in third.

The race was rich in incidents from the very start, as Nogués and Morbidelli made contact at the end of the straight, causing an incident that eliminated the Campos Racing Opel and the SEAT of Jordi Gené.

Following a three-lap safety-car period, the race resumed with Comini as a strong leader and a great battle behind him. Nykjær had to fight hard to keep the position from the assaults of Pepe Oriola and an amazing Bas Schouten. Schouten lost a well-deserved podium position on the last lap and Andrea Belicchi inherited the position, but he was later excluded as he did not observe a drive-through penalty.

Five other drivers received similar sanction, for overtaking during the safety-car intervention, which added further drama to the race. The WeastCoast Racing Honda cars of Morbidelli and Gleason were lucky, under the circumstances, to finish fourth and fifth.



Key moments

Start – Morbidelli did not start well, which allowed Nogués to get the inside line; they made contact and the Opel skidded sideways and collected Gené's car

Lap 1 – The safety-car was deployed and in the commotion Engstler and Grachev made contact; the Russian was forced to retire

Lap 5 – The race resumed with Comini in the lead ahead of Nykjær, Afanasyev, P. Oriola, Belicchi and Schouten; Morbidelli was last after a quick pit stop for repairs

Lap 5 – Oriola passed Afanasyev for third; Cebrián passed Schouten for sixth; Skuz retired with a throttle failure.

Lap 6 – There was a big fight between Nykjær and Oriola for second

Lap 7 – Nykjaer and Oriola made contact and Oriola lost third position to Schouten

Lap 8 – Comini was leading from Nykjaer, Schouten, Oriola, Belicchi, Cebrián and Veglia

Lap 11 – Gleason passed Engstler for ninth; Engstler retired claiming a loss of power

Lap 12 – Drive-through penalties were imposed to Afanasyev, P. Oriola, Belicchi, Cebrián and Veglia for overtaking during the safety car period

Lap 14 – Veglia, Afanasyev, Oriola and Cebrián observed their penalties

Lap 17 – Schouten lost third place due to a fuel issue; Comini won ahead of Nykjær and Belicchi

What the race winners had to say

Pepe Oriola, winner of Race 1: *"It was a good weekend for the Team-Craft Bamboo Lukoil, although Race 2 could and should have been better. In Race 1, everything was perfect, I had a great start and then it was relatively easy. I was followed by my two team mates, so I could just focus on preserving the tyres. It's nice to win again after such a long time! We had the pace to do very well in Race-2, but the whole scenario changed with the incident at the start, the safety-car and then the sanctions, and we weren't that lucky..."*

Stefano Comini, winner of Race 2: *"We did a great job, especially, after a disappointing start of the weekend. In Race 1, I took a very bad start and there is not much more to say. Race 2 was much better, it was the first time I was using the launch control on the SEAT and it worked well. Clearly, I benefitted from all the confusion and all the incidents, but it has to be recognized that I was the only one with the guts to go full throttle during the entire race, as proven by my lap times. The car was really perfect, and I am also very happy to be again on top of the points standings."*



1st RACE FINAL CLASSIFICATION

Clas.	Nº	Driver	Nat.	Entrant	Car	Laps	Total Time	Km/h.	Gap	Best	Time	Km/h.
1	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	15	26'06.049	138.100		3	1'42.778	140.283
2	77	Sergey Afanasyev	RUS	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	15	26'10.642	137.696	4"593	4	1'43.326	139.539
3	88	Jordi Gené	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	15	26'11.334	137.635	5"285	4	1'43.590	139.184
4	33	Andrea Belicchi	ITA	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	15	26'12.054	137.572	6"005	6	1'43.679	139.064
5	8	Mikhail Grachev	RUS	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	15	26'16.095	137.219	10"046	4	1'43.321	139.546
6	25	Stefano Comini	SUI	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	15	26'17.619	137.087	11"570	4	1'43.538	139.254
7	17	Michel Nykjær	DEN	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	15	26'18.130	137.042	12"081	4	1'43.873	138.805
8	10	Gianni Morbidelli	ITA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	15	26'23.778	136.554	17"729	4	1'44.023	138.604
9	34	Bas Schouten	NED	ST Motorsport / Bas Koeten Racing	SEAT León Racer	15	26'25.397	136.414	19"348	6	1'43.617	139.148
10	7	Lorenzo Veglia	ITA	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	SEAT León Racer	15	26'31.300	135.908	25"251	6	1'44.149	138.437
11	24	Kevin Gleason	USA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	15	26'32.233	135.829	26"184	11	1'44.329	138.198
12	11	Lucile Cypriano	FRA	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	15	26'33.211	135.745	27"162	13	1'43.659	139.091
13	19	Oscar Nogués Farré	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	15	26'46.068	134.659	40"019	14	1'45.388	136.809
14	32	David Cebrián	ESP	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	14	24'49.176	135.547	1 Lap.	4	1'43.977	138.666
15	20	Igor Skuz	UKR	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	14	26'13.486	128.284	1 Lap.	6	1'44.452	138.035
		NOT CLASSIFIED										
16	6	Franz Engstler	GER	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	7	25'29.642	65.981	8 Lap.	2	1'44.298	138.239
17	21	Jordi Oriola	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	5	27'15.075	44.090	10 Lap.	4	1'45.093	137.193

Fastest lap Pepe Oriola 1'42.778 140.283 Km/h.

Circuito de la Comunitat Valenciana on May 03, 2015

At 17:23

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STEWARD

TIMEKEEPER



2nd RACE FINAL CLASSIFICATION

Clas.	Nº	Driver	Nat.	Entrant	Car	Laps	Total Time	Km/h.	Gap	Best	Time	Km/h.
1	25	Stefano Comini	SUI	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	17	33'54.125	120.498		5	1'43.456	139.364
2	17	Michel Nykjær	DEN	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	17	34'01.900	120.039	7"775	6	1'43.403	139.436
3	10	Gianni Morbidelli	ITA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	17	34'11.857	119.456	17"732	6	1'43.814	138.884
4	24	Kevin Gleason	USA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	17	34'23.860	118.761	29"735	6	1'44.280	138.263
5	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	17	34'25.848	118.647	31"723	6	1'43.251	139.641
6	32	David Cebrián	ESP	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	17	34'26.626	118.603	32"501	6	1'43.563	139.220
7	7	Lorenzo Veglia	ITA	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	SEAT León Racer	17	34'29.804	118.420	35"679	6	1'43.468	139.348
8	34	Bas Schouten	NED	ST Motorsport / Bas Koeten Racing	SEAT León Racer	16	32'29.516	118.331	1 Lap.	10	1'43.427	139.403
9	77	Sergey Afanasyev	RUS	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	16	34'36.823	111.078	1 Lap.	6	1'43.663	139.086
		NOT CLASSIFIED										
10	6	Franz Engstler	GER	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT	11	23'53.991	110.600	6 Lap.	5	1'43.885	138.789
11	11	Lucile Cypriano	FRA	JSB Compétition	SEAT León Racer	10	22'11.572	108.279	7 Lap.	5	1'43.989	138.650
12	21	Jordi Oriola	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	5	13'28.195	89.199	12 Lap.	5	1'57.459	122.750
13	20	Igor Skuz	UKR	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	5	14'00.790	85.741	12 Lap.	5	2'25.135	99.342
14	19	Oscar Nogués Farré	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	1	02'31.067	95.442	16 Lap.	1	2'31.067	95.442
15	8	Mikhail Grachev	RUS	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Audi TT				17 Lap.			
16	88	Jordi Gené	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer				17 Lap.			

Car number 33 excluded according Art. 12.3.1. of de ISC

Fastest lap Pepe Oriola 1'43.251 139.641 Km/h.

Circuito de la Comunitat Valenciana on May 03, 2015

At 17:20

STEWARD

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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 28 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	8	25																							106		
2	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	0	12	15	5	25	15	0	4	15																							91		
3	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	0	18	18	1	0	12	5	25	10																							89		
4	Andrea Belicchi (ITA)	4	10	10	0	10	25	4	12	0																							75		
5	Kevin Gleason (USA)	5	8	6	3	15	8	0	0	12																							57		
6	Jordi Gené (ESP)	0	6	25	0	6	1	0	15	0																							53		
7	Michel Nykjær (DEN)	0	4	0	0	2	10	2	6	18																							42		
8	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	0	15	0	0	1	0	1	18	2																							37		
9	René Münnich (GER)	1	0	8	4	18	0	-	-	-																							31		
10	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	10	0																							16		
11	Franz Engstler (GER)	2	0	0	0	8	6	0	0	0																							16		
12	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA)	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	6																							12		
13	David Cébrian (ESP)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	8																								8	
14	Bas Schouten (NED)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	4																								6	
15	Norbert Tóth (HUN)	-	-	-	0	4	0	-	-	-																							4		
16	Ferenc Ficza (HUN)	0	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-																								3	
17	Frank Yu (HKG)	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-																								2	
17	Tengyi Jiang (CHN)	-	-	-	0	0	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	7	25	43																									209
2	Team Craft-Bamboo Lukoil	0	33	43	2	12	16	7	43	12																									168
3	WestCoast Racing	6	20	23	9	43	25	0	10	27																									163
4	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	2	4	8	3	12	14	1	16	6																									66
5	Zengő Motorsport	0	6	4	1	6	2	-	-	-																									19
6	Bas Koeten Racing	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	4																									10
7	JSB Compétition	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	8																									9
8	Campos Racing	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0																									2