

23 May 2015

Rounds 9 & 10 – Monza, Italy – 23/24 May 2015

QUALIFYING REPORT

Morbidelli and Honda claim second pole position

Under a cloudy sky and a threat of rain, Gianni Morbidelli drove his WestCoast Racing Honda Civic to lap the Monza circuit in 2:00.737, which gave him the second pole position after Shanghai.

The Italian driver was virtually uncatchable for the other competitors who had to settle for the positions immediately behind him. Eventually Stefano Comini and Pepe Oriola – currently first and second in the points ahead of Morbidelli – managed to qualify second and third.

Fernando Monje and Campos Racing kept on with the aim of improving the performance of the Opel Astra OPC; their work paid off as Monje was able to consistently close the gap and fight for third position on the grid. His final sixth place was a promising result in view of the next races.

Tom Boardman was set to drive the Ford Focus at a decent pace when he had to stop on the track because a number of indicators were signaling possible technical failures. Eventually his worries proved to be unfounded and he was able to drive back to the pits.

Another disappointed driver was Morbidelli's teammate, Kevin Gleason, who crashed with a puncture on his first qualifying lap and spoiled his chances to provide the icing on the cake for WestCoast Racing.

Sunday's races will go green at 12.35 and 14.05 local time, with a distance of 11 laps each.

Qualifying 1: Gleason misses the cut after crash

Gianni Morbidelli posted the fastest lap on his first attempt; his time of 2:01.737 was not to be beaten, although Stefano Comini posted a second fastest lap of 2:01.782 that was slower only by 0.045 seconds.

Comini's teammates Andrea Belicchi (2:01.884) and Michel Nykjær (2:02.038) were classified in third and fourth, while Fernando Monje and his Opel Astra (2:02.069) confirmed the brilliant fifth position achieved in the second Free Practice.

A disappointed Kevin Gleason missed the cut after crashing out on his first flying lap due to a puncture. Tom Boardman was consistently improving at the wheel of his Ford Focus, but his car stopped on the track a technical issue.

The following drivers advanced to Q2: Morbidelli, Comini, Belicchi, Nykjær, Monje, Gené, Oriola, Grachev, Skuz, Afanasyev, Veglia and D'Amico.



Qualifying 2: Morbidelli crushes his competitors

It only took one lap to Gianni Morbidelli for claiming pole position with an outstanding lap of 2:00.353 as none of his competitors was able to go under the 2:01 mark.

Target Competition and Bamboo-Craft Lukoil trios of drivers engaged themselves in a game to the last slipstreaming while trying to fill the positions behind the poleman. Eventually Stefano Comini secured second place (2:01.080) and Pepe Oriola moved up to third on a last gasp attempt (2:01.121) demoting his own teammate Sergey Afanasyev to fourth (2:01.382).

Andrea Belicchi raked fifth (2:01.762) ahead of a brilliant Fernando Monje (2:01.785).

Mikhail Grachev finished tenth (2:02.338), winning pole position for Sunday's second race.

RESULTS ATTACHED AT THE END OF THIS RELEASE

What the drivers had to say

Gianni Morbidelli, pole sitter: Gianni Morbidelli: *"I must say the car was perfect and that I am very happy, but I want to thank WestCoast Racing for the excellent work they have done. Whenever things go well like today, it is always because there is hard work behind it. Here, we also benefitted from the data gathered during winter testing. I am confident for Race 1 tomorrow, although with Comini and Oriola right next to me, it is going to be hard racing. I hope it will be good fighting, not like in Portimão..."*

Stefano Comini, qualified second: *"It was great tactics from the entire team with slipstreaming and I must thank my teammates for their support. Still, it wasn't possible to get any closer to Morbidelli and 0.7 seconds is quite a gap. Tomorrow, very reasonably, I will aim at being first of the rest..."*

Pepe Oriola, qualified third: *"I think Morbidelli and the Honda Civic are in a league on their own this time. We had a good performance, but it could have resulted in something better. Unfortunately, our towing strategy did not work very well. Still, it would have been impossible to beat Gianni. Tomorrow, I'll try to do my best and we'll see what comes out."*

Fernando Monje, qualified sixth: *"It was a very good result, our best in qualifying for the time being, and I am very happy for everybody at Campos Racing who has been working so hard to reach this level. It was a good qualifying and we progressed well with the set-up. It was just a pity to be so lonely on the track: with some towing, we could have been on the very front."*



Qualifying Combined OFFICIAL RESULT

Ord.	N°	Driver	Nat.	Entrant	Car	Laps	Laps1	BL1	Q1	Laps2	BL2	Q2	Q-Time	Km/h
1	10	Gianni Morbidelli	ITA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	10	7	3	2'01.737	3	2	2'00.353	2'00.353	173.280
2	25	Stefano Comini	SUI	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	9	5	4	2'01.782	4	4	2'01.080	2'01.080	172.240
3	74	Pepe Oriola	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	11	6	4	2'02.251	5	5	2'01.121	2'01.121	172.182
4	77	Sergey Afanasyev	RUS	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	13	9	4	2'02.473	4	4	2'01.382	2'01.382	171.811
5	33	Andrea Belicchi	ITA	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	11	6	5	2'01.884	5	3	2'01.762	2'01.762	171.275
6	22	Fernando Monje	ESP	Campos Racing	Opel Astra OPC	12	7	6	2'02.069	5	4	2'01.785	2'01.785	171.243
7	20	Igor Skuz	UKR	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	11	7	6	2'02.449	4	4	2'01.800	2'01.800	171.222
8	88	Jordi Gené	ESP	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	SEAT León Racer	14	9	8	2'02.128	5	3	2'01.859	2'01.859	171.139
9	36	Antonio D'Amico	ITA	B.D. Racing Motorsport	SEAT León Racer	14	10	8	2'03.066	4	4	2'01.959	2'01.959	170.998
10	8	Mikhail Grachev	RUS	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	SEAT León Racer	12	7	5	2'02.286	5	3	2'02.190	2'02.190	170.675
11	7	Lorenzo Veglia	ITA	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	SEAT León Racer	11	7	4	2'02.509	4	4	2'02.338	2'02.338	170.469
12	17	Michel Nykjær	DEN	Target Competition	SEAT León Racer	10	6	5	2'02.038	4	4	2'02.443	2'02.443	170.323
13	46	Zsolt Szábo	HUN	Zengő Motorsport	SEAT León Racer	3	3	2	2'06.582				2'06.582	164.753
14	71	Tom Boardman	GBR	Proteam Racing	Ford Focus ST	4	4	4	2'08.201				2'08.201	162.673
15	24	Kevin Gleason	USA	West Coast Racing	Honda Civic TCR	3	3	2	2'20.768				2'20.768	148.150

Autodromo di Monza on May 23, 2015

At 16:49

STEWARD

STEWARD

STEWARD

TIMEKEEPER

