

press release



12 January 2017

**Rounds 1 & 2 – Dubai Autodrome – 12 / 13 January 2017**

## **QUALIFYING REPORT**

### **Luca Engstler claims first ever pole in TCR Middle East**

The 16-year old Luca Engstler claimed the first pole position ever in the TCR Middle East Series. During the inaugural Qualifying session at Dubai Autodrome, the German teenager drove his Volkswagen Golf GTi TCR to a fastest lap of 2:10.133, inflicting a half-a-second gap to his more experienced teammate Mat'o Homola.

Homola was on top of the time sheet in the first part of the session when he set a provisional fastest lap of 2:11.290 that he managed to improve to 2:10.632. Brandon Gdovic moved provisionally into second position with a lap of 2:10.759, but was then demoted to third when Engstler posted his pole position time a few minutes before the end. Engstler, Homola and Gdovic meant a brilliant 1-2-3 result for the Liqui Moly Team Engstler.

The Italian duo of Michela Cerruti and Luigi Ferrara was involved in a close fight for the fourth position. Ferrara was clocked at 2:11.059 in the Top Run Subaru that provisionally placed him in second position. A few moments later Cerruti exactly matched Ferrara's time, but the two of them dropped to fourth and fifth following the improvements by Engstler and Gdovic.

Both Ferrara and Cerruti went out for a final attempt; Michela in the Mulsanne Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta clocked her own second fastest lap of 2:10.073 that helped her to move up from fifth to fourth, while Ferrara could not improve.

Filip Sládecka ended in sixth place ahead of James Kaye in the CadSpeed Racing Audi. Both Kaye and Kane Astin (Red Camel-Jordans SEAT León) were struggling as the teams had to adapt the cars to the different specs of the TCR Middle East and the 24 hour race in terms of weight, ride height and tyres.

The two 12-lap races will start tomorrow at 9:00 and 11:00 respectively and will be streamed live on the internet at [www.middleeast.tcr-series.com](http://www.middleeast.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv).

## Driver quotes after Dubai Qualifying

Luca Engstler (pole position): *"I'm over the moon! To be on pole position on my first Touring Car appearance is fantastic. It was not an easy task to face a quick and experienced driver like Homola, and I have to thank my team for working all night to prepare my car at its best. I have to say that the intense testing programme we worked on during the winter has really paid off. Now I can focus on tomorrow's race and I hope I can win them."*

Mat'o Homola (second fastest): *"I am a bit disappointed, because we had a problem with the fuel pump, and this affected the power every time I was coming out of the corners. Obviously this meant that I could not attack in the proper way and eventually prevented me from making a final attempt for improving my lap time. It was a shame, because we have worked a lot on the set up and the car's handling has improved a lot since this morning. I am confident that the team will solve the problem for tomorrow's races."*

Brandon Gdovic (third fastest): *"It is an interesting experience to be in a front-wheel drive racing car for the first time. Here I'm also racing a Ginetta GT4 in the 24 hours, which means a complete change of set up and feelings between the two cars. I am having a lot of fun! I'm pretty happy with the third fastest lap; I did not exactly know what to expect, so I am pleased with myself for having found the right way to drive fast in qualifying."*

Michela Cerruti (fourth fastest): *"We cannot complain. We have worked a lot on the set up of the cars and it paid off. This morning we were losing a lot of time in the second sector, while this afternoon my car was the fastest. We are still struggling with the traction out of the slow corner, so we think that there is a margin for a further improvement. But being fourth, four tenths behind Homola's second fastest lap is definitely a good result."*

Luigi Ferrara (fifth fastest): *"I am a bit disappointed, because I feel the potential of the car is better than it appears from the fifth fastest lap. Our main issue has always been the understeer, which had been amplified by the fact that the GT cars have left a lot of rubber on the track. Therefore, in my final attempt, I had to fight with too much grip after setting a fast time in the first sector. But I am confident for tomorrow's race one, because at 9:00 in the morning the track should be smoother."*

Hankook 24H DUBAI 2017  
24H SERIES 2017 - Race 1

TCR Middle East  
Result of Qualifying

10 - 14 January 2017  
Dubai - 5399 mtr.

Pos	Nbr	Name / Team name	Car	Fastest	In	Gap	Diff	Laps	Km/h
1	8	Luca Engstler Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	2:10.133	8			11	149.36
2	9	Mat'o Homola Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	2:10.632	6	0.499	0.499	7	148.79
3	46	Brandon Gdovic Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	2:10.759	8	0.626	0.127	10	148.64
4	88	Michela Cerruti Mulsanne Racing	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	2:11.059	7	0.926	0.300	11	148.30
5	12	Luigi Ferrara Top Run Motorsport	Subaru WRX STI TCR	2:11.059	7	0.926	0.000	12	148.30
6	11	Filip Sládečka Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	2:12.213	2	2.080	1.154	13	147.01
7	108	James Kaye Cadspeed Racing	Audi RS 3 LMS TCR	2:12.254	4	2.121	0.041	7	146.96
8	7	Stefan Goede Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	2:12.959	5	2.826	0.705	10	146.18
9	303	Kane Astin Red Camel-Jordans.nl	SEAT León TCR DSG	2:14.899	3	4.766	1.940	10	144.08

CAR 46 LAP TIME 2.11:563 REMOVED - TRACK LIMITS

Fastest time : 2:10.133 in lap 8 by nbr. 8 : Luca Engstler (Volkswagen)			Publication-time
Results and lap times : <a href="http://www.raceresults.nu">www.raceresults.nu</a>		Timekeeping by : RSTime by TimeService.nl	Time Printed : 12-01-2017 - 16:16
Race Director  Abdulaziz AL-Thawadi	Steward  Eyad Ebrahim	Timekeeper  Rob Oude Luttikhuis - TimeService.nl	Official Timekeeper <b>B.R.M.</b> ..Chronographes..
Page 1 of 1	Results remain provisional pending technical examination and decisions from the stewards of the meeting		