

# press release



**8 February 2017**

**Rounds 3 & 4 – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi – 10 / 11 February 2017**

## **PREVIEW**

### **Abu Dhabi hosts TCR Middle East's second race meeting**

The TCR Middle East Series will resume on Friday at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit, one month after the inaugural event took place at the Dubai Autodrome.

Liqui Moly Team Engstler's Volkswagen Golf GTi TCR cars won both races in the Dubai opener, with teammates Luca Engstler and Brandon Gdovic sharing the victories.

The upcoming weekend will be packed with action, as the TCR Middle East Series shares the bill with the region's Porsche GT3 Cup, Lamborghini Super Trofeo, Formula 4 and Radical Series.

The TCR Middle East Series will hit the track on Friday, with one 30-minute Practice session, a 35-minute Qualifying and the first 60-kilometre race. The second race will take place on Saturday morning.

#### **TCR in Abu Dhabi – the event at a glance**

Lap distance: 5.55 km  
Race distance: 11 laps

Timetable:	Friday, 09:35/10:05	Free Practice 1
	Friday, 13:20/13:55	Qualifying
	Friday, 17:05	Race 1
	Saturday, 10:40	Race 2

all times: GMT +4

### **Teammates Gdovic and Engstler to fight for the title**

Liqui Moly Team Engstler teammates Brandon Gdovic and Luca Engstler will be fighting for the TCR Middle East title when series resumes next week at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit.

Gdovic and Engstler shared race victories in the series' opener at Dubai Autodrome in January, with the former taking the lead in the standings with a five-point margin. In fact, the American was classified third in Race 1, before winning the second race, while the German teenager won the first race and finished sixth in the second.

The Liqui Moly Team Engstler will run three Volkswagen Golf GTi cars at Abu Dhabi, with Stefan Goede completing the driver line-up. On his first Touring Car appearance, Goede claimed a fifth and a fourth in the Dubai races.

Point-leader Gdovic stated: *"I'm looking forward to getting on track at Yas Marina for the first time and hopping back into the TCR VW Golf with Liqui Moly and Team Engstler. Hopefully I can have two more good races in Abu Dhabi and maintain my points lead and maybe end up with another win or two."*

His rival Engstler said: *"After Dubai I focused on school once again, but it's only a few days and then we can race again! My expectations are the same as three weeks ago: I want to learn as much as possible. Abu Dhabi is again a new track for me so we will see how it goes. Brandon did a great job in Dubai and he's a worthy championship leader. To drive against him is an honour for me, because he has so much experience and I can only learn from him."*

## **Two Honda cars for the Lap57 team in Abu Dhabi**

2016 TCR Germany champion Josh Files and United Arab Emirates Touring Car top runner Mohammed Al Owais will take part in the TCR Middle East Series's second round at Abu Dhabi. They will be driving two Honda Civic TCR cars for the Dubai-based Lap57 team.

Files, 26 years old from Norwich, England, returns at the wheel of the Japanese car with which he dominated last year ADAC TCR Germany's inaugural season.

*"I am very happy and excited to have the opportunity to compete in the TCR Middle East Series with team Lap57 in the next round at Yas Marina Circuit. It's a new team, new track and new competition for me, yet I bring with me a great deal of confidence as I will be back behind the wheel of a JAS-prepared Honda Civic TCR car once again. As a result, I will be pushing very hard to try to continue my winning ways,"* Files said.

Mohammed Al Owais and Lap57 have built themselves a reputation winning races and titles in the United Arab Emirates Touring Car and the Middle East Supercars championships, but also claiming brilliant results in long distance races such as the Nürburgring and Dubai 24 Hours.

Al Owais' commented: *"I am very happy to join the TCR Middle East Series. It will be a pleasure to drive with professionals in the sport."*

## **Davit Kajaia in a Mulsanne Racing Alfa Romeo**

Georgia's Davit Kajaia will join the TCR Middle East next weekend, for the series' second event at Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi.

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Kajaia, who was among the top runners in last year's TCR International Series, will drive a Mulsanne Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR. This is the very same car that Michela Cerruti drove to second place in the TCR Middle East opening round, three weeks ago in Dubai. And it was in Dubai, during the private test before the event that Kajaia sat behind the wheel of the Romeo Ferraris-built Alfa for the first time.

*"I was very impressed by both, the car and the team. I liked the Giulietta very much. It is easy to drive and provides a good feeling. I felt very comfortable at its wheel and it was like I had driven it before. On top of this, the team proved very friendly and professional. The car has a great potential as it was proved by Michela Cerruti's second place in Dubai. I am confident I can fight for podium positions in Abu Dhabi,"* said the Georgian driver.

## **Giacomo Altoè in The Top-Run Subaru**

Italian teenager Giacomo Altoè will make his TCR debut at Abu Dhabi, in the Top Run Motorsport Subaru WRX TCR.

Altoè, who is only 16 years old, completed his maiden automobile sport season last year in the Italian Formula 4 championship.

*"I'm happy and motivated to take part in the second event of the TCR Middle East Series at Abu Dhabi. This will be my first race of the year, but more than that my very debut in Touring Car competition!"* a delighted Altoè said.

The Subaru was driven by Luigi Ferrara in Dubai; after a promising qualifying the Japanese car retired with a broken bevel gear.

## **Success ballast for the championship top scorers**

The second event of the TCR Middle East Series at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit will see the allocation of success ballast to the top two drivers in the standings.

Liqui Moly Team Engstler's Brandon Gdovic and Luca Engstler – the race winners in the series' opener at Dubai – will carry 30 and 20 kilos of success ballast on board their Volkswagen Golf GTi cars respectively.

Gdovic is the current leader of the Middle East Series, with 43 points, while Engstler is second with 38.

The 10-kilo success ballast for the third best scorer will not be allocated as Mat'o Homola, who is currently placed third in the standings with 30 points, will not compete in Abu Dhabi.

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### Live timing from Yas Marina Circuit

Live timing of the TCR Middle East event in Abu Dhabi will be available at [www.middleeast.tcr-series.com](http://www.middleeast.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv), according to the timetable below:

Friday, 09:35 (06:35 CET) – Free Practice

Friday, 13:20 (10:20 CET) – Qualifying

Friday, 17:00 (14:00 CET) – Race 1

Saturday, 10:35 (07:35 CET) – Race 2

(all times local, GMT +4)

News, results, standings and pictures are available at [www.middleeast.tcr-series.com](http://www.middleeast.tcr-series.com)