

23 January 2018

**Rounds 3 & 4  
Dubai Autodrome - 26 / 27 January 2018**

**PREVIEW**

**TCR Middle East resumes after a five-day break**

The second race meeting of the 2018 TCR Middle East International Series will take place on Friday and Saturday at the Dubai Autodrome, only five days after the opening event was run at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit.

Competitors will race on the 4.3 km International Circuit that is used by TCR cars for the first time. In fact, the opening round of the 2017 TCR Middle East was run on the Grand Prix Circuit (5.4 km) and the final round of the 2017 TCR International Series on the National Circuit (3.6 km)

Just like last week in Abu Dhabi, the event will take place on Friday and Saturday, following the Middle East tradition that considers Saturday as race day.

Competitors will hit the track on Friday for two 30-minute Free Practice sessions, with the 30-minute Qualifying in the afternoon.

The two 60-kilometre races will be run on Saturday in the late morning and the early afternoon.

**Dubai – the event at a glance**

Lap distance: 4.33 km (International circuit)

Race distance: 14 laps

Start: standing

Grids: determined by the Qualifying results with top 10 reversed for Race 2

Timetable:	Friday, 10:00/10:30	Free Practice 1
	Friday, 13:15/13:45	Free Practice 2
	Friday, 15:55/16:25	Qualifying
	Saturday, 10:45	Race 1
	Saturday, 13:55	Race 2

all times: GMT +4

**Giacomo Altoè and Luca Engstler shared wins at Abu Dhabi**

The opening event of the 2018 TCR Middle East International Series delivered a couple of eventful races at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit.

Giacomo Altoè (Audi RS3 LMS run by Pit Lane Competizioni) and Luca Engstler (Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf GTI) emerged as the race winners and left Abu Dhabi as first and second in the standings.

In Race 1 Altoè converted his pole position into a victory. The Italian driver sprinted at the start and never looked back, as he was able to keep Mat'o Homola's Volkswagen Golf GTI at bay in the first part of the race before increasing his leading gap in the final laps.

Homola maintained the second place, although he was closely chased by the Liqui Moly Team Engstler duo of Engstler and Florian Thoma who delivered a thrilling fight for the third position.

In the second race TCR returnee Lorenzo Veglia crossed the line first. He led for most of the race ahead of Thoma and Engstler, but the final laps were red-hot. On lap 15 Thoma clashed with Veglia and took the lead ahead of Engstler. However, two laps later the young Swiss was forced to retire with a broken suspension. Engstler inherited the lead, but on the last lap he and Veglia made contact; the Italian got the better of the situation and crossed the line first, with a slim margin. Kai Jordan finished a comfortable third ahead of Giacomo Altoè and Homola.

After the race, Veglia was given a 30-second penalty for hitting Engstler on the final lap. This dropped Italian from first to eighth, while Engstler inherited victory, with Kai Jordan and Giacomo Altoè promoted to second and third respectively.

Giacomo Altoè is the series' first leader with 45 points, while Engstler is second, only one point adrift. Homola lies third with 33 points.

### **Giacomo Altoè to have maximum Success Ballast**

The allocation of Success Ballast for the second race meeting of the TCR Middle East International Series follows the championship standings.

Giacomo Altoè, who won the opening race in Abu Dhabi and is currently on top of the Drivers' classification with 45 points will carry the maximum ballast of 30 kilos on board of his Audi RS3 LMS.

The 20 kilos for the second best scorer will be on Luca Engstler's Volkswagen Golf GTI, as the young German won Abu Dhabi's Race 2 and is currently second in the standings, one point behind Altoè.

Mat'ò Homola – third with 33 points – will be given 10 kilos of ballast.

As a result, the running weights of the first three cars will be: Altoè's Audi DSG 1285 kg (1250 + 5 BoP + 30 ballast); Engstler's Golf SEQ 1285 (1285 – 20 BoP + 20 SB); Homola's Golf DSG 1235 kg (1250 – 25 BoP + 10 SB).

### **2018 TCR Middle East Series – calendar**

19/20 January – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi

**26/27 January – Dubai Autodrome**

23/24 February – Bahrain International Circuit

For further information, results and HD pictures: <http://middleeast.tcr-series.com>