

26 January 2018

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

QUALIFYING

Luca Engstler wins pole position with an amazing lap

Luca Engstler completed a lap of Dubai's International Circuit with the amazing lap time of 1:44.454 that gave him pole position for tomorrow's Round 3 of the TCR Middle East international series.

The young German drove his Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf GTI car to smash the 1:45 barrier, while all his competitors remained above that mark. His performance was even more remarkable when considering the 20 kilos of Success Ballast he has to carry.

With a last gasp effort Giacomo Altoè was able to post the second fastest lap of 1:45.127, but still with a gap of nearly seven tenths from Engstler. The Italian too was fighting against the weight, carrying 30 kilos of ballast on board of his Audi RS3 LMS.

This result placed Engstler and Altoè as joint leaders in the standings on equal points.

Kai Jordan confirmed his consistent progress and qualified in a brilliant third position with the time of 1:45.271, just ahead of Danny Kroes (1:45.369) and Mat'ò Homola (1:45.411). Florian Thoma (1:45.670) ranked sixth, with Jordi Oriola and Giovanni Altoè behind him having clocked the same lap time (1:46.316).

Costas Papantonis qualified tenth and will be on pole position on the reverse grid for Race 2 – just like in Abu Dhabi last week – and will have Martin Ryba alongside him.

Lorenzo Veglia could not post a decent lap time due to a broken rear suspension; he will be forced to start from 11th in both the 14-lap races that will take place tomorrow at 10:45 and 13:55 local time respectively.

Drivers' quotes after the Qualifying session

Luca Engstler (pole position): *"It was a crazy lap! I knew it was good and I expected to see a 45.0 or maybe a high 44. But when I saw 44.4, I couldn't believe my eyes! The set up we chose was perfect for qualifying, the car was balanced and performance was not affected by the ballast. But now we have to find something different for the races, because this set up would be too tough with the tyres over the distance. Dubai is really my favourite track: I won last year in TCR Middle East – my first ever Touring Car race – and two weeks ago in the 24 hours."*

Giacomo Altoè (2nd fastest): *"I'm quite pleased as it was an unexpected result. We had struggled in the practice sessions and eventually decided to try something different and it paid off. My qualifying lap was really on the limit! I was amazed by Luca's performance; he has been incredibly quick and it seems that the ballast is not causing him as many problems as it does to us. For sure the ballast will be a factor in the races, in terms of tyre and brake wear. We have to find how to manage them in the best possible way."*

Kai Jordan (3rd fastest): *“I’m very happy. My goal was to qualify between third and fifth and I did third. I couldn’t expect anything better than this. We have worked a lot to change the set up from the beginning of the first practice and we finally found a configuration that suits my driving style. I have managed to be faster lap by lap and to reduce the braking spaces. Now, my next goal is to finish on the podium again...”*

Danny Kroes (4th fastest): *“Fourth was not a bad result for my first Qualifying in the Audi. However, I have lost a couple of tenths in my fastest lap, otherwise I could have been second. Now I will try to be on the podium in the first race.”*

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

Further information, results, HD pictures and live timing at <http://middleeast.tcr-series.com>

4. TCR Middle East

International Circuit 4.290 km

Qualifying

26/01/2018 15:45

Qualifying (30:00 Time) started at 15:45:30

Pos	No.	Name	Laps	Diff	Gap	Best Tm	In Lap
1	8	Luca ENGSTLER	11			1:44.454	7
2	10	Giacomo ALTOE'	12	0.673	0.673	1:45.127	11
3	13	Kai JORDAN	11	0.817	0.144	1:45.271	9
4	24	Danny KROES	10	0.915	0.098	1:45.369	7
5	70	Mat'o HOMOLA	10	0.957	0.042	1:45.411	8
6	39	Florian THOMA	7	1.216	0.259	1:45.670	3
7	21	Jordi ORIOLA	11	1.862	0.646	1:46.316	6
8	23	Giovanni ALTOE'	10	1.862		1:46.316	8
9	17	Martin RYBA	15	1.982	0.120	1:46.436	11
10	9	Costas PAPANTONIS	8	2.260	0.278	1:46.714	4
11	44	Lorenzo VEGLIA	4	5.545	3.285	1:49.999	3

Announcements
OFFICIAL RESULT

Clerk of the Course
Chief Timekeeper

Orbits

