

21 February 2018

**Rounds 5 & 6  
Bahrain International Circuit - 23 / 24 February 2018**

**PREVIEW**

**Bahrain hosts the final event of TCR Middle East**

The 2018 TCR Middle East International Series will come to an end on Friday and Saturday at the Bahrain International Circuit with its third race meeting, after having visited Abu Dhabi and Dubai in January.

Competitors will race on the 2.55 km Oasis Circuit that was used last year for the TCR Middle East series' finale when Josh Files won both races at the wheel of the Lap57 Honda Civic and secured the title.

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 a 90-minute Free Practice session, with the 30-minute Qualifying in the evening.

The two 60-kilometre races will be run on Saturday evening.

**Bahrain – the event at a glance**

Lap distance: 2.55 km (Oasis circuit)

Race distance: 24 laps

Start: standing

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

Timetable:	Friday, 18:00/19:30	Free Practice
	Friday, 21:20/21:50	Qualifying
	Saturday, 19:00	Race 1
	Saturday, 21:00	Race 2

all times: GMT +3

**Engstler and Altoè: two teenagers in the title fight**

The fight for the Drivers' title is wide open between Luca Engstler and Giacomo Altoè who are both 17 years old. They are currently split by only 14 points, with 55 still on offer.

The German driver has won two races out of four so far at the wheel of his Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf GTI (Race 2 in Abu Dhabi and Race 1 in Dubai) and finished the other two in second position. His consistency has helped him to jump to the top of the standings with 89 points.

Altoè – the winner of Abu Dhabi's Race 1 – struggled in Dubai where his Audi RS3 LMS couldn't stay on the pace with 30 kilos of success ballast on board. In Bahrain, Altoè's car will be ballast-free and the Italian will try to wipe out his 14-point gap from Engstler.

Mathematically speaking, three other drivers are still in contention: Mat'ò Homola (25 points behind the leader), Florian Thoma and Kai Jordan (with gaps of 40 and 41 points respectively). However, their chances appear to be purely theoretical.

Thanks to victories for Engstler and Thoma in the Dubai races, the Liqui Moly Team Engstler has built a leading margin of 31 points in the Teams' classification. However, Pit Lane 1 and Pit Lane 2 - currently 31 and 35 points behind - can still hope to overturn the situation.

### **Maximum Success Ballast for Luca Engstler in Bahrain**

Liqui Moly Team Engstler drivers Luca Engstler and Florian Thoma will carry 30 and 20 kilos respectively of Success Ballast in the final event of the 2018 TCR Middle East International Series at the Bahrain International Circuit.

Engstler and Thoma shared race victories in the previous meeting at the Dubai Autodrome and the 17-year old German is the current leader in the standings.

Mat'o Homola will be given the 10 kilos of Success Ballast as the third best scorer in Dubai.

As a result, the running weights of the three cars will be: Engstler's Golf SEQ 1295 (1285 – 20 BoP + 30 SB); Thoma'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>