

23 February 2018

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

QUALIFYING

Luca Engstler claims another pole position Kai Jordan and Florian Thoma will be guarding his back

Team Engstler really made a statement in tonight's Qualifying at Bahrain International Circuit, as the three Volkswagen Golf GTI cars prepared by the German squad filled the first three spots on the grid of Race 1.

Points leader Luca Engstler, in the Liqui Moly-liveried VW Golf GTI, took his second pole in this year's series ahead of Kai Jordan, in the H&R Spezialfeldern-entered car, and the other Liqui Moly driver, Florian Thoma. Engstler will therefore be in an ideal position to clinch the title ahead of the two decisive races tomorrow.

The Qualifying session, though, had seen a strong start of the Pit Lane Competizioni cars, with Giacomo Altoè, Jordi Oriola and Lorenzo Veglia taking the Top-3 in the early stages. After ten minutes, proceedings were stopped by the red flag to allow rescuing the Golf of Raed Himmo, which ended stuck in the gravel after an off-track.

Immediately after action resumed, Luca Engstler posted his best lap time (1:09.056) that eventually meant the pole position, while Altoè, Thoma, Veglia and Oriola improved their times as well. In the final part of the session, Thoma provisionally climbed to the second place before being beaten by an excellent Kai Jordan who clocked a lap only 0.212 slower than Engstler's.

The two night races that will decide the TCR Middle East Series 2018 title will take place tomorrow Saturday at 19:00 and 21:00 local time respectively. After tonight's qualifying, Engstler has stretched his leading margin to 17 points ahead of Altoè.

Drivers' quotes after Bahrain Qualifying

Luca Engstler (pole position): *"I'm very happy of this pole position that I conquered in 'full attack' mode. It was a tough session, where I also had a huge spin in my second-fastest lap. It's not easy to find the right balance on this track, especially when you are carrying 30 kgs of success ballast, but the team did an excellent job. Of course, having my team mates behind me is perfect for tomorrow. I will try to stay cool and focused, and take things lap by lap."*

Kaj Jordan (2nd fastest): *"I am really happy with this result. We progressed consistently in our set-up work and I had an almost perfect lap. The team did an excellent job and I managed to achieve my goal, which was to be in the Top-3. Tomorrow I will aim at a podium finish."*

Giacomo Altoè (4th fastest): *"This is really a track where you see a difference between the Volkswagen and the Audi, it really suits the Golf perfectly! Although we did a pretty decent job, it is very difficult to compete against them... Tomorrow, we will see what we can do. It may be a different story as the weather forecast points to rain..."*

Jordi Oriola (6th fastest): *“I am a little bit frustrated, of course, and I also lost my best lap time because of a track limits infringement. The Golf here is also on a different level, also because their sequential gearbox gives them a huge advantage, with a perfect usage of ratios and much better traction.”*

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>

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TCR ME
Result of Qualifying

23 - 24 February 2018
Oasis Circuit - 2550 mtr.

Pos	Nbr	Name	Car	Fastest	In	Gap	Diff	Laps	Km/h
1	8	Luca Engstler (GER)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI	TCR 1:09.056	4			11	1:09.056
2	13	Kai Jordan (GER)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI	TCR 1:09.268	9	0.212	0.212	14	1:09.268
3	39	Florian Thoma (SUI)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI	TCR 1:09.451	10	0.395	0.183	15	1:09.451
4	10	Giacomo Altoè (ITA)	TCR Audi RS 3 LMS TCR DSG	1:09.573	8	0.517	0.122	9	1:09.573
5	44	Lorenzo Veglia (ITA)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI DSG	1:09.836	6	0.780	0.263	11	1:09.836
6	21	Jordi Oriola (ESP)	TCR Audi RS 3 LMS TCR DSG	1:10.181	2	1.125	0.345	8	1:10.181
7	17	Martin Ryba (SVK)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI	TCR 1:11.064	6	2.008	0.883	15	1:11.064
8	7	Nasser Al Alawi (BRN)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI DSG	1:11.362	8	2.306	0.298	9	1:11.362
9	55	Raed Himmo (BRN)	TCR Volkswagen Golf GTI DSG	1:13.898	2	4.842	2.536	2	1:13.898

Fastest time : 1:09.066 in lap 4 by nbr. 8 : Luca Engstler (GER) (TCR)

Publication-time

Results and Laptimes :

Timekeeping by : Bahrain International Circuit

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Clerk of the Course	Steward	Timekeeper	
		Mansoor Al Faraj	
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