

# press release



26 September 2016

**Rounds 19 & 20 – Sepang – 29 September / 1 October 2016**

## **PREVIEW**

### **TCR returns to Sepang 18 months after the inaugural event**

Two weeks after racing at Singapore's Marina Bay Street Circuit, the TCR International Series will be part of a Formula One event once again, this weekend at Sepang.

The Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix has a special place in TCR's short history, because 18 months ago Sepang hosted the first-ever International Series event.

On that occasion, Stefano Comini made history by clinching victory in the series' maiden race; the first step for him on the way to being crowned champion. Jordi Gené won the second race and was greeted by his younger brother Marc, former Ferrari tester and now F1 TV commentator.

As always, when it joins Formula One, the TCR International Series has to adapt its format to the Grand Prix timetable. In the case of Sepang, with GP2 and GP3 also part of the event, TCR competitors will first hit the track on Thursday for a 30-minute Practice session.

Activity will continue on Friday with a 30-minute Qualifying session split into Q1 (15 minutes) and Q2 (10 minutes, for the twelve fastest in Q1)., followed by the first race.

The second race will take place Saturday in the early afternoon, just before the F1 Qualifying.

#### **TCR in Sepang – the event at a glance**

Lap distance: 5.54 km

Race distance: 11 laps or 25 minutes

Start: standing

Grids: determined by the Qualifying results (Q1+Q2), with top-10 reversed for Race 2

Timetable:	Thursday, 17:50/18:20	Free Practice
	Friday, 08:40/09:10	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Friday, 17:45	Race 1
	Saturday, 15:30	Race 2

all times: GMT +8

#### **Leopard Racing cars to be laden by Success Ballast**

Leopard Racing teammates Jean-Karl Vernay and Stefano Comini will carry the two heaviest amounts of Success Ballasts in the next race meetings at Sepang.

# press release



Vernay, the winner of the first race at Singapore, was the event's best scorer with 38 points, while Comini – second and fourth in the two races – bagged 33 points. As a result, Vernay's Volkswagen Golf will be laden by 30 kilos of Success Ballast and Comini's by 20. The third-highest weight addition of 10 kilos will be imposed to the B3 Racing Team SEAT León of Mat'o Homola who scored 26 points at Singapore.

With this success ballast added to the BoP, the running weights of the three cars will be 1315 kg for Vernay's Volkswagen, 1305 kg for Comini's Volkswagen and 1325 for Homola's SEAT. The Craft-Bamboo Lukoil SEAT cars of James Nash and Pepe Oriola, who are first and third in the championship classification, will run on 1315 kg.

## **TCR Asia joins the International Series at Sepang**

TCR Asia will join the TCR International Series for their penultimate event of the season. The change in venue came about after a delay in the completion of the Zhejiang Circuit in China, the originally scheduled destination for the fourth race meeting of the season on 21/23 October.

Current championship leader Andy Yan from Hong Kong will drive one of three Liqui Moly Team Engstler Volkswagen Golf cars, alongside Macau's Filipe de Souza – who had already joined in Singapore – and International Series regular Davit Kajaia.

Two other Volkswagen cars will be run by TeamWork Motorsport for Macau's Kevin Tse (currently second in the TCR Asia standings) and William O'Brien, born in the USA, but now resident in Hong Kong.

The Asian contingent will include one Honda Civic car entered by Team Thailand for Tin Sritrai (who made a one-off appearance in the International Series last year at Buriram) and, last but not least, Malaysia's Douglas Khoo will race in his home event at the wheel of the same Viper Niza Racing SEAT León he drove at Singapore.

## **Nicky Pastorelli to drive the FRD Motorsport Ford Focus**

FRD Motorsport has called up Nicky Pastorelli to drive the Ford Focus TCR at Sepang. The car successfully completed its maiden appearance in the TCR International Series at Singapore, where Martin Cao Hongwei finished 13<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the two races.

*"We were pleased with those results. The car finished both races and all the sessions while showing constant improvement. All the testing in the world would not simulate true racing conditions and, in this respect, I think our car passed with flying colours. Finishing close to the points position on our debut event showed that the FRD Ford Focus TCR has great potential. Our race pace was encouraging, but most importantly we identified areas in need of improvement, so we have worked hard to refine our car for Sepang,"* Said Kenneth Ma, president of FRD.

Pastorelli, 33 years old born in The Hague, Netherlands, is an experienced single-seater and sportscar driver; a former champion in the Euro F3000 and a race winner in the FIA GT1 World Championship and the International GT Open, he has also been test driver for the Minardi and Midland Formula 1 teams.

He said: *"I am excited to discover the TCR International Series, about which I have heard many nice things, and the Ford Focus. I have very good relationship with FRD engineering personnel from past experience, and they have called me in for this event. It is going to be interesting and challenging, as I don't know the car, which is still in full development, I don't know the track and this will be my first experience with a front-wheel drive touring car. But I like this kind of challenge!"*

## **New Italian champion Colciago with Target in Malaysia**

Arguably one of Italy's most experienced Touring Car drivers, Roberto Colciago who was crowned national champion last weekend at Imola, will make his maiden appearance in the TCR International Series at Sepang this week.

The 48-year old boasts an impressive racing CV that includes an Italian F3 title, victories in the Fuji International F3 League and the German F3 series before the switch to Touring Cars a category in which he was even more successful. At the wheel of Opel, BMW, Honda, Audi, Alfa Romeo and SEAT cars he amassed victories in the European, Italian, Spanish and Swedish championships that granted him two Italian and two Swedish titles. Colciago retired from racing at the end of the 2010 season, but made a surprise comeback this year to drive an AGS Motorsport Honda Civic TCR in the Italian Touring Car Championship, in which he won eight races out of the twelve held so far on the way to clinch yet another title.

*"The possibility to race at Sepang is the icing on the cake at the end of a very successful season. It's no secret that the TCR concept had an important part in my decision to comeback to racing, as I believe this is the future for Touring Car competition for both the national and the international championships. I'm very looking forward to race in Malaysia and I will do my best for being competitive straight away with the top drivers of the TCR International Series,"* Colciago said.

## **Michela Cerruti and Petr Fulín to miss Sepang**

Both Mulsanne Racing drivers, Michela Cerruti and Petr Fulín, will be forced to miss the next event at Sepang this week.

Cerruti is still suffering from the consequences of renal colic and is currently undergoing medical checks, while the Czech racer is committed to fight for the title of the FIA European Touring Car Cup at Imola on the same weekend.

The team will therefore run only one Alfa Romeo Giulietta in Malaysia that will be driven by Mario Ferraris, son of Romeo Ferraris the principal of the engineering company that has developed and built the car.

Mario is an experienced driver, with records in GT and Touring Car competitions, very often at the wheel of cars developed by the family firm, like the Fiat Cinquone Abarth in last year's Italian Touring Car Championship.

*"The choice to put Mario in the car is part of the technical development programme that we want to carry on in view of next season. He is very experienced in setting up and fine-tuning and will drive in a number of tests after the end of the season,"* team manager Claudio Bortoletto explained.

## **Grid penalty for Rafaël Galiana at Sepang**

Whatever will be its qualifying result, Rafaël Galiana's Honda Civic will be dropped ten positions on the grid for the first race at Sepang.

Target Competition's French driver incurred in this penalty as the Stewards deemed him guilty of a collision with Neric Wei's Volkswagen Golf on the seventh lap of Singapore's Race 2, while they were fighting over 14<sup>th</sup> position.

Both, Galiana and Wei were forced to retire after the incident.

## **Weekend live on the Internet from Sepang and Hockenheim**

The TCR International Series races in Sepang will benefit from live streaming on the web, as well as the races of the ADAC TCR Germany's finale at Hockenheim that is also counting as final round of the TCR Trophy Europe, according to the timetable here below:

### **TCR International Series, Sepang**

([www.tcr-series.com](http://www.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv))

Friday, 17:40 (11:40 CET) – Race 1, **streaming**

Saturday, 15:25 (09:25 CET) – Race 2, **streaming**

(all times local, GMT +8)

### **TCR Germany / TCR Trophy Europe, Hockenheim**

([www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv) and [www.adac-motorsport.de/livestream-adac-tcr-germany.html](http://www.adac-motorsport.de/livestream-adac-tcr-germany.html))

Friday, 10:25 – Practice 1, **timing**

Friday, 15:25 – Practice 2, **timing**

Saturday, 11:05 – Qualifying, **timing**

Saturday, 14:40 – Race 1, **timing and streaming**

Sunday, 16:35 – Race 2, **timing and streaming**

(all times CET, GMT +2)