



15 April 2017

## Rounds 3 & 4 – Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix – 14 / 16 April 2017

### RACE 1 REPORT

#### **Roberto Colciago wins from Valente and Vernay Five different car brands fill the top five places**

Roberto Colciago claimed his second TCR International Series victory after last year's win at Sepang, which also occurred during a Formula One event.

The M1RA driver and his Honda Civic Type-R made a perfect start and overhauled both the pole-sitter Pierre-Yves Corthals and Hugo Valente to lead the field going into Turn 1. That turned out to be the critical move as far as Colciago was concerned and the Italian driver led for the remainder of the nine-lap race. Valente drove a sensible race to finish second, the SEAT León never really threatening Colciago, while Jean-Karl Vernay finished third after a thrilling series of battles with Corthals, James Nash and Dušan Boković ended with Boković making contact with Corthals, which allowed Vernay's Volkswagen to dive past the pair into a podium place.

In all, five different car brands filled the first five places with Boković's Alfa Romeo and the Opel Astra of Corthals joining the Honda, SEAT and Volkswagen of the podium finishers. Stefano Comini's Audi finished eighth making six brands in the top-eight.

Corthals suffered from power-sapping high engine temperatures in the race's last few laps while it was a brake problem that caused Boković to run into Corthals and so ultimately deny the Opel a top-three finish.

In the Drivers' championship, the result means four drivers are within a point of each other; Colciago and Vernay both have 40 points while the two race winners in Georgia Pepe Oriola (who finished sixth) and Davit Kajaia (who retired with a broken driveshaft) each have 39.

Race 2 will take place at 13:00 local time on Sunday, with Ferenc Ficza (Zeke Racing SEAT León) and Dušan Boković (GE-Force Alfa Romeo Giulietta) sharing the front row on the top-ten reverse grid.

The race will be streamed live at [www.tcr-series.com](http://www.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv).

#### Key facts

Start – Colciago makes the best start and leads from Valente and Corthals into Turn 1

Lap 1 – There's a close fight between Kajaia, Nash and Vernay for 4<sup>th</sup>; Kajaia and Vernay make contact; Boković passes Vernay, but Vernay then passes Boković again and keeps fifth place; Nash also passes Boković for 6<sup>th</sup>

Lap 2 – Boković passes Nash and Vernay for 5<sup>th</sup> place

Lap 3 – There is contact between Homola and Morbidelli at Turn 1; Kajaia stops on the track with a broken driveshaft

Lap 4 – Vernay passes Nash for 5<sup>th</sup>

Lap 5 – Comini passes Ficza for 8<sup>th</sup>

Lap 6 – Morbidelli passes Ficza for 9<sup>th</sup>



Lap 7 – Vernay and Borković fight for 4<sup>th</sup>; Ende pits with brake problems

Lap 8 – Borković attacks Corthals for 3<sup>rd</sup>; Vernay passes Borković for 4<sup>th</sup>, but Borković re-takes the position; Borković and Corthals make contact and Vernay passes them both to take 3<sup>rd</sup> place

Lap 9 – Oriola passed Nash for 6<sup>th</sup>; Colciago wins from Valente and Vernay

### Quotes from the Race 1 podium finishers

Roberto Colciago (1<sup>st</sup>): *“It might have looked easy, but it wasn’t! The start was really good and after four or five laps, there was a good gap behind me. I didn’t push so hard at the beginning of the race so my tyres were still good for the second part. It’s really important not to make any mistakes at this circuit – I made one small mistake when I braked at the end of the straight, but afterwards I made no more. In the championship, there are many, many good drivers and we are always within two or three tenths, so it is much too early to be thinking about that.”*

Hugo Valente (2<sup>nd</sup>): *“I was quite happy with my start but I know the Honda is always very strong off the line; I don’t have a lot of experience yet with this car and we couldn’t practice starts yesterday. Roberto managed his tyres well at the beginning of the race, he made a mistake but I made a few too. I maybe could have overtaken him, but it was too risky and I need to score points for the championship, so I cooled down a bit and he was just too fast. After that, I was looking in my mirrors and also enjoying watching the big TV on the straight! I think tomorrow will definitely be more exciting and I’ll be looking for another good result for the team again.”*

Jean-Karl Vernay (3<sup>rd</sup>): *“My start was just terrible, so I need to work on my coordination because I’ve been struggling with that for a few months now. I was lucky not to spin on the first lap, but after that I tried to be a little bit calm. We had a small engine problem, as sometimes there was no power when I was back on the throttle. I lost a lot of time behind Borković because he did a good race and was quite fast on the straights so the only way to overtake him was to wait for a mistake and in the end it happened. I think we deserved the result – my team did a great job and the car was really, really quick so let’s see how we do tomorrow.”*

### Qualifying: Homola was fastest, but Corthals inherited pole

The DG Sport Compétition pairing of Mat’o Homola and Pierre-Yves Corthals placed the Opel Astra cars on top of the TCR International Series timesheets for the first time. The Belgian beat his Slovak teammate in Q1, but eventually it was Homola who emerged as the fastest in Q2, beating Corthals by nearly four tenths of a second.

However, Homola could not fully benefit from his exploits as he was demoted to the back of the grid for Race 1 following an engine change that occurred after yesterday’s first Practice.

Corthals therefore inherited pole position with Hugo Valente (Lukoil Craft-Bamboo SEAT León) completing the front row.



Roberto Colciago (M1RA Honda Civic Type-R) started from the third spot alongside Davit Kajaia (GE-Force Alfa Romeo Giulietta) who managed to claim fourth position despite the 30-kilo Success Ballast.

Jean-Karl Vernay (Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf GTi) and James Nash (Lukoil Craft-Bamboo SEAT León) filled the third row.

Ferenc Ficza (Zeke Racing SEAT León) qualified in tenth place and so won pole position on the top-ten reverse grid for tomorrow's Race 2, with Dušan Borković (GE-Force Alfa Romeo Giulietta) at his side.

Following an appeal lodged by WestCoast Racing, the timekeepers amended Giacomo Altoè's fastest lap in Q1, from 2:15.061 to 2:13.953 a time that would have allowed him to take part in Q2.

Qualifying 1: Corthals beat Homola

The DG Sport Compétition Opel Astra cars made an impressive 1-2 with Pierre-Yves Corthals setting the fastest lap of 2:11.903 ahead of his teammate Mat'ò Homola (2:12.149).

Roberto Colciago was third fastest (2:12.956) in the best of the M1RA Honda Civic Type-R cars, followed by Jean-Karl Vernay (2:13.223), Dušan Borković (2:13.273) and Hugo Valente (2:13.291).

On his last attempt Attila Tassi (2:13.297) moved up to seventh, demoting by one position Ferenc Ficza, James Nash and Gianni Morbidelli. Pepe Oriola and Davit Kajaia rounded off the top-twelve for Q2. It was a close call for the Georgian driver who had had his fastest lap disallowed for trespassing the track limits.

Surprisingly, Stefano Comini – the fastest in yesterday's Free Practice 2 – was again struggling with the balance of his Audi and could not make the cut, together with Michela Cerruti, Giacomo Altoè and Duncan Ende.

Qualifying 2: Homola and Corthals encored

Homola set the first pole position in TCR for Opel, posting a fastest lap of 2:12.073 that was nearly four tenths ahead of the rest of the field. Corthals placed the second Astra in second position (2:12.451) with Valente (2:12.656) third, Colciago (2:12.672) fourth, Kajaia (2:12.877) fifth and Vernay (2:12.896) sixth.

### What the fastest drivers said after Qualifying

Mat'ò Homola (1<sup>st</sup>): *"We had a problem with the engine in Free Practice because of the heat and the guys worked all night to change it. I only did two laps yesterday and so Qualifying was a big mystery for me, but I knew how the track behaves and how I should behave from last year. Congratulations to DG Sport and to Opel on their first pole position. Okay, I lost pole because of the penalty, but I wanted to see what the car could do. I made one mistake on my quickest lap, so I think I could have been ever faster."*

Pierre-Yves Corthals (2<sup>nd</sup>): *"I really didn't expect to be as fast as that. Everyone had problems with the air temperature, but maybe the others suffered more than us. I made two big mistakes during my fastest lap in Q2 so I lost a lot of time. I was really happy for the team and for Opel because it was good to have the pole position in Bahrain when we are with Formula One."*



Hugo Valente (3<sup>rd</sup>): *“I don’t really know what to think of the penalty for Mat’o – I would have preferred to have been on the cleaner line. Yesterday was quite difficult but I’ve been working with my engineer on the set up and today I was able to pull out a few things.”*

### **First BoP adjustment of the season applied in Bahrain**

Following the Qualifying session in Bahrain, and taking into account the results of the first race meeting of the season in Georgia, the TCR Technical Department has decided to make the first Balance of Performance adjustments of the year ahead of today’s Race 1 in Bahrain.

It was decided to reduce the engine power of the Opel Astra TCR cars to 95%, while a ride height break of 10mm has been granted to the Audi RS3 LMS and the SEAT León TCR cars that use a DSG gearbox (in Bahrain, this only applies to the Icarus Motorsports SEAT of Duncan Ende).

All car weights remain unchanged.

### **2017 TCR International Series – calendar**

2 April – Rustavi International Motorpark, Georgia

16 April – Bahrain International Circuit (F1 event)

6 May – Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium (WEC event)

14 May – Autodromo di Monza, Italy (ELMS event)

11 June – Salzburgring, Austria

2 July – Hungaroring, Budapest (GT Open event)

9 July – Motorsport Arena Oschersleben, Germany (with ADAC TCR Germany)

3 September – Chang International Circuit, Buriram (with TCR Thailand)

8 October – Zhejiang International Circuit, China (with TCR Asia and TCR China)

26 November – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi (F1 event)



## Race 1 Classification after 9 Laps - 48.462 Kms

POS	NO	DRIVER	NAT	ENTRANT	LAPS	TIME	GAP	KPH	BEST	LAP
1	5	<b>R. COLCIAGO</b>	ITA	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	9	20:15.241		143.562	2:13.690	4
2	7	<b>H. VALENTE</b>	FRA	SEAT Leon TCR	9	20:20.743	5.502	142.915	2:13.884	4
3	2	<b>J. VERNAY</b>	FRA	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	9	20:22.878	7.637	142.666	2:13.978	3
4	62	<b>D. BORKOVIC</b>	SRB	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	9	20:24.004	8.763	142.534	2:13.972	2
5	23	<b>P. CORTHALS</b>	BEL	Opel Astra TCR	9	20:24.902	9.661	142.430	2:14.033	2
6	74	<b>P. ORIOLA</b>	ESP	SEAT Leon TCR	9	20:25.153	9.912	142.401	2:14.070	3
7	54	<b>J. NASH</b>	GBR	SEAT Leon TCR	9	20:26.525	11.284	142.241	2:14.653	5
8	1	<b>S. COMINI</b>	SUI	Audi RS 3 LMS TCR	9	20:26.822	11.581	142.207	2:14.658	4
9	10	<b>G. MORBIDELLI</b>	ITA	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	9	20:27.441	12.200	142.135	2:14.688	4
10	21	<b>G. ALTOE</b>	ITA	Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR	9	20:34.302	19.061	141.345	2:15.130	2
11	55	<b>F. FICZA</b>	HUN	SEAT Leon TCR	9	20:35.637	20.396	141.192	2:14.958	3
12	9	<b>A. TASSI</b>	HUN	Honda Civic Type-R TCR	9	20:37.111	21.870	141.024	2:16.001	4
13	70	<b>M. HOMOLA</b>	SVK	Opel Astra TCR	9	20:37.159	21.918	141.019	2:15.606	2
14	88	<b>M. CERRUTI</b>	ITA	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	9	20:39.722	24.481	140.727	2:16.257	4
15	18	<b>D. ENDE</b>	USA	SEAT Leon TCR	6	19:06.432	DNF	101.195	2:17.819	5
<b>NOT CLASSIFIED</b>										
16		<b>D. KAJAIA</b>	GEO	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR	2	4:33.288	DNF	139.342	2:13.635	2
<b>FASTEST LAP</b>										
16		<b>D. KAJAIA</b>	GEO	Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR		2:13.635 on lap 2		145.794		

Timekeeper:

### A Support Event Race to the 2017 FORMULA 1 GULF AIR BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX - Sakhir

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