



3 September 2017

Rounds 15 & 16 – Chang International Circuit, Buriram – 2 / 3 Sep. 2017

RACE REPORT

Michelisz and Panis make a Honda double win in Thailand Tassi leads the championship by 2 points ahead of Vernay

Buriram's Chang International Circuit had never been successful for the Honda drivers in the two previous visits of the TCR International Series to Thailand. Today the luck of the men at the wheel of the Civic cars changed – and then some!

Not only did Norbert Michelisz (M1RA) and Aurélien Panis (Boutsen Ginion Racing) share race victories, but Michelisz's teammates Giacomo Altoè and Attila Tassi were both able to finish on the podium and the young Hungarian has jumped back on top of the championship standings as a result.

The first race was one of the liveliest ever, bestowing both honours and tears in almost equal measure. It was a bitter end to the race for Mat'ò Homola, DG Sport Compétition and the Opel Motorsport technicians who saw a well deserved first victory vanishing on the last-but-one lap because of a blown tyre. Lukoil Craft-Bamboo, too, had reasons to lament as both James Nash and Pepe Oriola were stopped by technical failures while they were still fighting for the podium positions. Oriola's withdrawal with a broken gearbox was especially painful, because it sidelined the Spaniard in Race 2 and so greatly compromised his hopes to fight for the title.

While some were weeping, M1RA – with Michelisz and Tassi first and third – and GE Force, with Dušan Borković second after a recovery, were over the moon. However, the Italo-Georgian team has some regrets, because Borković showed a pace that could have resulted in victory without his incident in yesterday's Q1.

In the second race, Panis took an authoritative lights-to-flag victory, although a part of the credit goes to his crew that managed to solve a throttle issue on the starting grid. Altoè claimed his first TCR International podium on his maiden appearance at the wheel of a M1RA Honda, while Stefano Comini salvaged a third place that helps him to stay in contention for the title, third in the standings and 14 points from the leader.

The TCR International Series will resume in China, at the brand new Zhejiang Circuit, on October 7 and 8.

Race 1 – Michelisz inherits the win as Homola stops

Mat'ò Homola was on the verge of claiming his maiden win at the wheel of the DG Sport Compétition Opel Astra when he was forced to retire with a blown front tyre with only two laps to go. This is the second consecutive race in which the young Slovak has lost a victory in the final moments, after he was passed by Gianni Morbidelli on the last lap of Oschersleben's Race 2.

As a result, Norbert Michelisz – who was not even expected to race in Thailand – gratefully inherited his first victory in the TCR International Series. The Hungarian ace, called in at the last minute to replace the injured Roberto Colciago, was driving with one eye on the rear view mirror to check how his M1RA Racing teammate Attila Tassi was performing while defending himself from the attacks of Jean-Karl Vernay.



Eventually he found himself the winner with Tassi in third, so claiming two of the podium places for the Honda Civic. Second place went to the Alfa Romeo of an ecstatic Dušan Borković who completed a fantastic recovery from 13th on the grid. An even better performance came from his teammate Davit Kajaia, who recovered from 23rd to 8th. After being so competitive in previous years here at Buriram, Lukoil Craft-Bamboo suffered setbacks as both James Nash and Pepe Oriola retired while they were fighting for the podium positions.

Key facts

Grid – Panis and Kajaia are at the back of the grid following engine changes

Start – Homola sprints from pole and takes the lead, followed by Michelisz and Nash

Lap 1 – Tassi overtakes Nash for third

Lap 2 – Vernay and Nash swap positions twice, Nash retains third place, Oriola follows them in fifth

Lap 4 – Nash outbrakes himself at T1 and drops to fifth behind Vernay and Oriola; Borković overtakes Altoè for 7th

Lap 5 – Morbidelli overtakes Vervisch for 9th

Lap 6 – Vernay and Oriola are chasing Tassi

Lap 7 – Oriola overtakes Vernay for fourth; Nash retires with a broken driveshaft

Lap 8 – there are contacts in a four way fight for second place, Michelisz is followed by Oriola, Tassi and Vernay; Borković overtakes Vernay for fifth

Lap 9 – Borković overtakes Tassi for fourth

Lap 10 – Tassi is chased by Vernay, Altoè, Morbidelli and Huff; Huff and Morbidelli make contact

Lap 12 – Morbidelli runs wide at T1 and drops to 11th behind Huff, Comini and Kajaia; Lloyd overtakes Morbidelli for 11th; Promsombat hits a pile of tyres and retires while leading TCR Thailand

Lap 13 – Homola retires from the lead with a blown front left tyre ; Michelisz leads from Oriola and Borković

Lap 14 – Oriola stops on the track from second with a gearbox failure; Michelisz wins from Borković; Tassi retains third place despite a contact with Vernay at the last turn; Nuya wins the TCR Thailand race from Lewattanavaragul and Leenutaphong

Race 2 – Panis victorious for Boutsen Ginion

In only his second appearance in the TCR International Series, Aurélien Panis scored his maiden victory at the wheel of the Honda Civic car run by Boutsen-Ginion Racing.

It was a lights-to-flag victory for the young Frenchman who took the lead at the start and built a small cushion between himself and Giacomo Altoè, who finished second.

It was a result to remember for the Italian teenager as well, after he had switched to a M1RA Honda Civic only on the eve of the Thai event.

Despite losing one place to Altoè at the start, Stefano Comini managed to collect a third place that keeps his chances of winning a third consecutive title well alive.

Attila Tassi finished fourth, ahead of Jean-Karl Vernay in fifth, and this helped the Hungarian to reclaim the lead in the standings, albeit only two points ahead of Vernay.

Actually Tassi's margin could had been larger without a technical failure that stopped Norbert Michelisz on the last lap which prevented him from finishing fifth ahead of Vernay.



Key facts

Grid – Oriola (5th) is missing, following the gearbox failure suffered in Race 1

Start – Panis starts well from pole and leads from Altoè, Comini and Tassi

Lap 1 – Comini and Tassi are in a close fight for second

Lap 2 – Vernay overtakes Nash for 7th; there is a four-way battle for 9th between Huff, Borković, Homola and Kajaia

Lap 4 – Vernay overtakes Kusiri for 6th; Nash hits Kusiri who drops to 11th

Lap 5 – Borković overtakes Huff for 8th; Nuya leads in TCR Thailand but is chased by Leewattanavaragul

Lap 6 – Hanjtkasen overtakes Leenutaphong for third in TCR Thailand

Lap 8 – Vernay is chasing Michelisz for fifth; Borković overtakes Nash for 7th

Lap 9 – Homola dives inside Kusiri, but goes wide; Ende overtakes Vervisch for 16th

Lap 10 – Vervisch retakes 16th from Ende

Lap 11 – Kajaia retires from 10th with a flat front tyre

Lap 12 – Leewattanavaragul attacks Nuya's leadership in TCR Thailand

Lap 13 – smoke comes out of Michelisz's car

Lap 14 – Michelisz slows, Vernay moves up to fifth; Panis wins from Altoè and Comini; Nuya encores in TCR Thailand, beating Leewattanavaragul and Promsombat

Quotes from the podium finishers in the two races

Norbert Michelisz (1st in Race 1): *"I'm absolutely over the moon! Before the weekend, we didn't really expect to win races to be honest. The Civic is carrying a lot of weight but we did some great work and the team found a good balance. I'm really happy for Attila because he scored the most points and I'm also happy for Giacomo, because I think he can be proud of himself. We knew what we had to do in Qualifying and both races went well. I had luck because Homola suffered a puncture. I could see that he was pushing and so I followed him to increase the pressure, but I could see in the mirror that Attila might need some help so I dropped back. Oriola was too close and so it didn't work as well as it might, but at the end it is how it is and so I'm happy for the team."*

Aurélien Panis (1st in Race 2): *"I knew before the races that our pace was really good, because in Free Practice and Qualifying was really fast but we didn't get the perfect lap to be in front. P10 and so start Race 2 from pole position was the best possible qualifying result for us. I must say thank you to the team because the car was great to drive. I'm very happy to be in TCR International and to win today. For the young drivers it's a really good series and it's great to be fighting with the top drivers like Michelisz, Vernay or Comini. The level is very high and for that reason I'm very happy to win today."*

Dušan Borković (2nd in race 1): *"I was really disappointed after Qualifying because of what happened. To start from the middle of the grid is always difficult but I had an okay start and I was able to attack. On some circuits the car is good and in others we need to improve it, particularly in slow and medium corners, but the team did a really good job this weekend. The brakes were good in Race 1 and I decided not to change them, but I started locking up in Race 2 and so I had to be careful. Luckily the Alfa is a little bit faster on the straights and so I could keep Nash and Huff behind me. I'm not really focusing on the championship, but I know I'm not far behind Oriola now."*



Giacomo Altoè (2nd in race 2): *“It’s unbelievable – I’m so happy. The car was perfect and this was a really good result for me and for the team. I feel really at home with this team and with JAS. After this result, maybe a victory is possible, so I will try the maximum to achieve it. I’m taking things race by race and my priority has to be to help M1RA to win the team’s championship.”*

Attila Tassi (3rd in race 1): *“This weekend couldn’t have been any better. It all came together in Race 1 and we had a good first lap. I overtook Vernay after the start and went around the outside of Nash at Turn 3. After that, it was tough as I fought with Vernay for 14 laps and had to manage my tyres. Norbi tried to help me once, but Oriola and Vernay were right behind me and it was a big risk. I lost two positions and then Borković came with the Alfa. P1 and P3 for M1RA was really good for the drivers’ and teams’ standings. In Race 2, I had another good start and then Norbi was behind me so it was a bit safer than Race 1. There was a good fight with Comini on the first lap and I always enjoy fighting with him, it was a lot of fun.”*

Stefano Comini (3rd in race 2): *“This wasn’t exactly what I needed, to be honest. I wanted to leave here leading the championship, but we didn’t have the pace. I ruined the first start and lost many positions. I only wanted to avoid contact to secure the car for Race 2. The second start was a little difficult as it took a bit too long and I was worried about the engine temperature and the clutch. It was a tough race as I wanted to preserve the tyres but it was a good race for me. It’s a bit more complicated now, but it’s still open. We need to work with Audi ahead of China but I’m fairly happy.”*

TCR Thailand – Nuya wins two from Lewattanavaragul

For the second consecutive year, TCR Thailand’s competitors raced together with the International Series at Buriram’s Chang International Circuit.

Chariya Nuya scored a double victory in the Billionaire Boys Racing Honda Civic, which helped him to take the lead in the series’ Pro Am class, 11 points ahead of Morin Racing’s Nattanid Lewattaravanagul. The lady driver proved to be fast and tough enough to make Nuya’s life hard in both races, finishing twice a very close second.

Despite the fact that he was forced to retire in Race 1 Pasarit Promsombat (RMI Racing SEAT León) clinched the title in the Am class with one event still to go.

In Race 1, Promsombat took the lead from Nuya on lap 3, however with only three laps to go he hit a pile of tyre and retired. Nuya inherited the lead and crossed the finishing line first, only three seconds ahead of Leewattanavaragul. Rattanin Leenutaphong completed the podium at the wheel of his Yotrakit Racing Team SEAT León.

Nuya led the whole second race, but he had to fight hard to defend his lead from the attacks of Lewattanavaragul who was chasing him within striking distance. Behind them, Nattachak Hanjitkasen (TBN MK Here Racing Honda) overtook Leenutaphong for third on lap 6; on lap 11 Leenutaphong lost also fourth position to Promsombat.

The fight for third was white-hot and eventually Promsombat managed to clinch it on the last lap from Leenutaphong and Hanjitkasen.



A delighted Nuya commented: *“I’m very happy with the results in both races. I did my best, but it wasn’t enough to fight with the International Series drivers. My ambition is to maybe move up from TCR Thailand into TCR Asia or even higher. I will need to talk to my sponsor about that, but this weekend and the race results have helped.”*

The championship will return to Buriram for its final race meeting on September 23 and 24.

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
- 18 June – Hungaroring, Hungary (DTM Event)
- 9 July – Motorsport Arena Oschersleben, Germany (with ADAC TCR Germany)
- 3 September – Chang International Circuit, Buriram (with TCR Thailand)**
- 8 October – Zhejiang Circuit, China (with TCR Asia & TCR China)
- 26 November – Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi (F1 event)

TCR International Series 2017

TCR International Series Official Result Race 1

2 - 3 September 2017
Buriram - 4554 mtr.

Started: 24 Not Started: 0 Classified: 23 Not Classified: 1

| Pos | Nbr | Name / Entrant | Car | Cls | PIC | Gap | Total time | Fastest | In | Avg. Speed |
|--|-----|---|--------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|------------|----------|----|------------|
| 1 | 59 | Norbert Michelisz (HUN) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 1 | -- | 14 laps -- | 24:44.820 | 1:44.919 | 4 | 154.57 |
| 2 | 62 | Dušan Borković (SRB) GE-Force | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 2 | | 3.769 | 24:48.589 | 1:45.161 | 5 | 154.18 |
| 3 | 9 | Attila Tassi (HUN) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 3 | | 5.923 | 24:50.743 | 1:45.243 | 3 | 153.96 |
| 4 | 2 | Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA) Leopard Racing Team WRT | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 4 | | 6.211 | 24:51.031 | 1:44.873 | 4 | 153.93 |
| 5 | 3 | Rob Huff (GBR) Leopard Racing Team WRT | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 5 | | 6.428 | 24:51.248 | 1:45.280 | 12 | 153.91 |
| 6 | 21 | Giacomo Altoè (ITA) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 6 | | 7.358 | 24:52.178 | 1:45.692 | 3 | 153.81 |
| 7 | 1 | Stefano Comini (SUI) Comtoy Racing | Audi RS 3 LMS TCR | 7 | | 10.610 | 24:55.430 | 1:45.719 | 3 | 153.48 |
| 8 | 16 | Davit Kajaia (GEO) GE-Force | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 8 | | 11.142 | 24:55.962 | 1:45.442 | 5 | 153.42 |
| 9 | 17 | Daniel Lloyd (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | 9 | | 14.196 | 24:59.016 | 1:45.741 | 3 | 153.11 |
| 10 | 10 | Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) West Coast Racing | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 10 | | 15.050 | 24:59.870 | 1:45.764 | 3 | 153.02 |
| 11 | 6 | Frédéric Vervisch (BEL) Comtoy Racing | Audi RS 3 LMS TCR | 11 | | 16.646 | 25:01.466 | 1:45.729 | 3 | 152.86 |
| 12 | 19 | Kantadhee Kusiri (THA) West Coast Racing | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 12 | | 17.143 | 25:01.963 | 1:45.783 | 3 | 152.81 |
| 13 | 18 | Duncan Ende (USA) Icarus Motorsports | SEAT León TCR | 13 | | 19.316 | 25:04.136 | 1:46.315 | 4 | 152.59 |
| 14 | 67 | Munkong Sathienthirakul (THA) DG Sport Compétition | Opel Astra TCR | 14 | | 22.733 | 25:07.553 | 1:46.352 | 5 | 152.24 |
| 15 | 85 | Chariya Nuya (THA) Billionaire Boys Racing | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | T | 1 | 26.322 | 25:11.142 | 1:46.839 | 10 | 151.88 |
| 16 | 96 | Nattanid Leewattanavaragul (THA) Morin Racing Team | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 2 | 29.542 | 25:14.362 | 1:46.497 | 3 | 151.56 |
| 17 | 83 | Rattanin Leenutaphong (THA) Yontrakit Racing Team | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 3 | 42.071 | 25:26.891 | 1:47.217 | 6 | 150.31 |
| 18 | 86 | Nattachak Hanjitkasen (THA) TBN MK Ihere Racing Team | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | T | 4 | 42.445 | 25:27.265 | 1:47.262 | 5 | 150.28 |
| 19 | 28 | Aurélien Panis (FRA) Boutsen Ginion Racing | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 15 | | 54.267 | 25:39.087 | 1:45.617 | 11 | 149.12 |
| 20 | 65 | Douglas Khoo Kok Hui (MAS) Viper Niza Racing | SEAT León TCR | T | 5 | 1:46.431 | 26:31.251 | 1:50.831 | 7 | 144.23 |
| 21 | 74 | Pepe Oriola (ESP) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | 16 | -- | 13 laps -- | 22:59.688 | 1:45.130 | 4 | 154.47 |
| 22 | 70 | Mat'ò Homola (SVK) DG Sport Compétition | Opel Astra TCR | 17 | -- | 12 laps -- | 21:37.805 | 1:44.834 | 4 | 151.58 |
| 23 | 84 | Pasarit Promsombat (THA) RMI Racing Team by Sunoco | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 6 | 25.472 | 22:03.277 | 1:46.652 | 7 | 148.67 |
| Not Classified Classification limit (75% of 14 Laps) = 10 Laps | | | | | | | | | | |
| DNC | 54 | James Nash (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | | | -- 7 laps -- | 26:12.792 | 1:45.362 | 5 | 72.96 |


Fastest time : 1:44.834 in lap 4 by nbr. 70 : Mat'ò Homola (Opel Astra TCR)

Publication-time

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Timekeeping by: TimeService.nl

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| Steward | Steward | Steward |  |
| Page 1 of 1 | Results remain provisional pending technical examination and decisions from the stewards of the meeting | | |



LUKOIL



TCR International Series 2017

TCR International Series Official Result Race 2

2 - 3 September 2017
Buriram - 4554 mtr.

Started: 23 Not Started: 1 Classified: 23 Not Classified: 1

| Pos | Nbr | Name / Entrant | Car | Cls | PIC | Gap | Total time | Fastest | In | Avg. Speed | | |
|-------------|-----|---|--------------------------|-----|-----|------------|------------|----------|----|------------|--|--|
| 1 | 28 | Aurélien Panis (FRA) Boutsen Ginion Racing | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 1 | -- | 14 laps -- | 24:34.503 | 1:44.446 | 4 | 155.66 | | |
| 2 | 21 | Giacomo Altoè (ITA) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 2 | | 1.274 | 24:35.777 | 1:44.580 | 4 | 155.52 | | |
| 3 | 1 | Stefano Comini (SUI) Comtoy Racing | Audi RS 3 LMS TCR | 3 | | 6.120 | 24:40.623 | 1:44.992 | 2 | 155.01 | | |
| 4 | 9 | Attila Tassi (HUN) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 4 | | 7.994 | 24:42.497 | 1:45.078 | 5 | 154.82 | | |
| 5 | 2 | Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA) Leopard Racing Team WRT | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 5 | | 9.414 | 24:43.917 | 1:44.911 | 3 | 154.67 | | |
| 6 | 62 | Dušan Borković (SRB) GE-Force | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 6 | | 12.632 | 24:47.135 | 1:44.639 | 4 | 154.33 | | |
| 7 | 54 | James Nash (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | 7 | | 13.369 | 24:47.872 | 1:44.974 | 3 | 154.26 | | |
| 8 | 3 | Rob Huff (GBR) Leopard Racing Team WRT | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 8 | | 13.861 | 24:48.364 | 1:44.630 | 3 | 154.21 | | |
| 9 | 70 | Mat'ò Homola (SVK) DG Sport Compétition | Opel Astra TCR | 9 | | 18.084 | 24:52.587 | 1:45.400 | 5 | 153.77 | | |
| 10 | 19 | Kantadhee Kusiri (THA) West Coast Racing | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 10 | | 18.830 | 24:53.333 | 1:45.227 | 3 | 153.69 | | |
| 11 | 17 | Daniel Lloyd (GBR) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | 11 | | 20.555 | 24:55.058 | 1:45.618 | 5 | 153.52 | | |
| 12 | 67 | Munkong Sathienthirakul (THA) DG Sport Compétition | Opel Astra TCR | 12 | | 21.357 | 24:55.860 | 1:45.540 | 3 | 153.43 | | |
| 13 | 10 | Gianni Morbidelli (ITA) West Coast Racing | Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR | 13 | | 22.946 | 24:57.449 | 1:45.885 | 7 | 153.27 | | |
| 14 | 6 | Frédéric Vervisch (BEL) Comtoy Racing | Audi RS 3 LMS TCR | 14 | | 30.660 | 25:05.163 | 1:45.944 | 3 | 152.48 | | |
| 15 | 18 | Duncan Ende (USA) Icarus Motorsports | SEAT León TCR | 15 | | 31.425 | 25:05.928 | 1:45.674 | 6 | 152.41 | | |
| 16 | 85 | Chariya Nuya (THA) Billionaire Boys Racing | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | T | 1 | 35.585 | 25:10.088 | 1:46.390 | 6 | 151.99 | | |
| 17 | 96 | Nattanid Leewattanavaragul (THA) Morin Racing Team | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 2 | 36.363 | 25:10.866 | 1:46.645 | 5 | 151.91 | | |
| 18 | 84 | Pasarit Promsombat (THA) RMI Racing Team by Sunoco | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 3 | 48.076 | 25:22.579 | 1:46.315 | 2 | 150.74 | | |
| 19 | 83 | Rattanin Leenutaphong (THA) Yontrakit Racing Team | SEAT León TCR DSG | T | 4 | 49.369 | 25:23.872 | 1:47.191 | 5 | 150.61 | | |
| 20 | 86 | Nattachak Hanjitkasen (THA) TBN MK Ihere Racing Team | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | T | 5 | 54.333 | 25:28.836 | 1:46.444 | 6 | 150.12 | | |
| 21 | 65 | Douglas Khoo Kok Hui (MAS) Viper Niza Racing | SEAT León TCR | T | 6 | 1:38.064 | 26:12.567 | 1:50.474 | 12 | 145.95 | | |
| 22 | 59 | Norbert Michelisz (HUN) M1RA | Honda Civic Type-R TCR | 16 | -- | 13 laps -- | 22:59.757 | 1:45.056 | 3 | 154.46 | | |
| 23 | 16 | Davit Kajaia (GEO) GE-Force | Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR | 17 | -- | 11 laps -- | 20:19.625 | 1:44.902 | 4 | 147.86 | | |
| Not Started | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DNS | 74 | Pepe Oriola (ESP) Lukoil Craft-Bamboo Racing | SEAT León TCR | | | | | | | | | |


Fastest time : 1:44.446 in lap 4 by nbr. 28 : Aurélien Panis (Honda Civic Type-R TCR)

Publication-time

Results: www.raceresults.nu

Timekeeping by : TimeService.nl

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| Steward | Steward | Steward |  |
| Page 1 of 1 | Results remain provisional pending technical examination and decisions from the stewards of the meeting | | |



