

SPORTS



Aidan Payne/DTNN  
aidan@dt.bh

Manama

Spain's Pepe Oriola driving a SEAT Leon TCR made it a glorious double success this weekend after winning race two of the opening round of the Touring Car Racing (TCR) International Series yesterday which is a support to the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir.

The Spaniard completed the 10-lap 54.366km race in 22 minutes:36.458 despite starting sixth on the grid at the start and recorded the fastest lap on the second (2:13.511) and a speed of 145.929k/ph.



Winners celebrate on the podium

The TCR uses a system whereby the top 10 from the first race start in reverse order on the grid, whilst the remaining drivers keep their remaining finishing positions.

Oriola quickly made ground and was quickly into third place but heading the field at

the eighth and hang onto the lead at the finish.

Second place went to Briton James Nash driving a SEAT Lion TCR who was a further 1.572 seconds behind, while Finland's Aku Pellinen driving a Honda Civic TCR was third (+4.372) after fifth

on the grid. The race had a dramatic moment early on the second lap when Jean-Karl Verney of France driving a Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR ripped the back off the car of defending champion Stefano Comino (also a Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR) and was black flagged, while Comino had to retire.

Kevin Gleason of the US driving a Honda Civic TCR led the way for seven laps before retiring on the next lap after originally starting third on the grid.

Fourth to sixth places went to Dusan Borkovic (Srb, SEAT Leon TCR, +6.463), Davic Kajaja (Ger, Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR, +10.265) and Mat'o

Homolo (Svk, SEAT Leon TCR, +12.848) respectively.

The remaining top ten places were occupied by Sergey Afanasyev (Rus, SEAT Leon TCR, + 15.063), Jordi Oriola (Esp, Opel Astra TCR, + 23.461), Gianni Morbidelli (Ita, Honda Civic TCR, + 23.617) and Luigi Ferrara (Ita, Subaru STI TC, +24.851) seventh to tenth respectively.

Bahrain's Salman bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa (SEAT Leon Cup Racer, +31.718) finished a respectable 11th and compatriot Hussain Karimi (SEAT Leon Cup Racer, +54.796) followed in 12th in their debut weekend in the TCR series out of the 18 drivers of whom 15 finished.