



ROUNDS 15 & 16 PRACTICE AND QUALIFYING

Weather: sunny, with a dry track.

PRACTICE 1 – ALFA ROMEO MEN ARE FASTEST

As the FIA WTCC cars hit the new Istanbul track for the first time, the Alfa Romeos appear to have found the early pace. Lap by lap the times were falling, with the top five drivers eventually running under 2:07.00. These include all the four Alfa Romeo men with Gabriele Tarquini heading the pack and the only driver to enter the 2 minute 5 second zone. His time of 2:05.963 was posted with five minutes of the session remaining. Team-mate James Thompson was at the top for a long period but in the end his best time was 0.301 of a second off that of Tarquini. The Alfa drivers were split by Team Oreca Playstation driver, Stéphane Ortelli's 2:06.379 who shot towards the top of the table in his final laps. Fourth and fifth best times went to Fabrizio Giovanardi and Augusto Farfus.

Jordi Gené continued to impress in the new SEAT León as he set the sixth fastest lap. The best of the BMW drivers was Dirk Müller, his time of 2:07.114 placed him 7th quickest with team-mate Jörg only 0.041 of a second behind. Thomas Klenke took to the track well in his Ford Focus as he was an encouraging 10th. The Chevrolets did not have such a great start however as their best result came from Nicola Larini in 16th. The best of the independent competitors was Stefano D'Aste, 13th quickest overall while local man Erkut Kizilirmak was at the back of the pack. Carl Roseblad completed only 4 laps before spinning off at Turn 1 and being stranded into the gravel trap.

PRACTICE 2 – ORTELLI POST THE BEST LAP

Stéphane Ortelli, at the wheel of his Team Oreca SEAT Toledo Cupra, emerged as fastest during the second free practice session. The driver from Monaco posted a lap time of 2:05.806 in the final minutes and demoted Gabriele Tarquini to second by beating his time by 0.143 of a second. Just as in the first session, James Thompson was right behind his Alfa Romeo team-mate as he was third fastest, while SEAT Sport's Jordi Gené repeated his good pace to set the fourth best time. The Alfa Romeo cars of Fabrizio Giovanardi and Augusto Farfus were 5th and 6th quickest respectively while the two BMW Team Deutschland drivers Jörg and Dirk Müller slot in the next two positions. Thomas Klenke of Ford Hotfiel Sport continued his good results on the Turkish track by completing the 11th fastest lap just 1.271 of a second off the top pace. Nicola Larini was again the best of the Chevrolet drivers improving to 13th quickest.

Adriano De Micheli's best lap in his Honda Accord was 16th quickest overall and the best of the independent drivers. Fellow independent competitor, Tom Coronel only completed 5 laps as his GR Asia SEAT car had undergone an engine change in between the sessions.



QUALIFYING – ALFA ROMEO QUARTET ON TOP

Alfa Romeo stormed the qualifying session to claim both the front rows on tomorrow's grid. Gabriele Tarquini will be on pole position with Thompson to join him at the front, then Augusto Farfus and Fabrizio Giovanardi will line up right behind. Immediately Thompson went to the top of the time sheet with a 2:05.128 lap - faster than any of the times posted in the practice sessions. After ten minutes however, it was Farfus' turn to occupy the top spot before, nine minutes later, Tarquini set a fantastic 2:04.525. It is incredibly close at the top as all the Alfas are within just half a second of each other.

Behind the red pack there are two SEAT cars. Stéphane Ortelli achieved a time of 2:05.118 to take fifth place, while Peter Terting came through towards the end of the session to post the sixth best time. The fastest of the BMW drivers was Andy Priaulx who clocked the 7th quickest time on his penultimate lap. Behind the Briton sits another SEAT duo in the form of Jordi Gené and Rickard Rydell with 8th and 9th grid spots. Championship leader Dirk Müller posted the 10th fastest lap, while his team-mate Jörg, 14th fastest, had his times disallowed for not stopping at the weighing scales.

The bid to be the best independent was fought between Carl Rosenblad and Adriano De Micheli. During the session both drivers made it into the top ten but it was De Micheli of JAS Motorsport who was eventually quicker. With just 2 minutes remaining he completed a lap in a brilliant 2:05.644 making him 11th overall on the starting grid.

12th position went to Nicola Larini in his Chevrolet Lacetti and team-mate Alain Menu appeared to have made some progress as he was 15th overall. Rob Huff, the final Chevrolet driver did not take part in the session as mechanics were working to fix the flywheel of his car.

Thomas Klenke failed to emulate the results he had in practice sessions and will start from 20th with Ford Hotfiel Sport team-mate in the position ahead. Tom Coronel will occupy the 24th spot, having been demoted due to an engine change, with only Jörg Müller behind him.



ROUNDS 15 & 16 QUALIFYING QUOTES

Gabriele TARQUINI, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – fastest

“The track seems to suit the car. We made a simulation at home which has worked well and the gear ratios and set-up was very good for me. I had to wait while the mechanics fixed a problem with oil coming from my gear box. This left me with 15 minutes on the track but it was enough. The first lap was very good, but not perfect because I made a mistake. However, the following lap was great so I was able to take pole. I was ready in the pits with new tyres in case I needed to go back out because I was conscious there was every chance that one of my team-mates would go faster than me. This didn’t happen so I have managed to save my second set of tyres for tomorrow.”

James THOMPSON, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – 2nd fastest

“It’s been a fantastic result so far for the team, the car works very well here. The story of the championship seems to be that some manufacturers get on well at particular circuits while the others have to play catch-up all weekend. In this case our cars have worked exceptionally well straight away and it was just a fight between ourselves. I think Istanbul Park is a fantastic circuit and a great place to drive. It will be nicer when it has had a few more races because it is still slightly dirty off the race line. The long straights and good track width should provide some great racing tomorrow with a lot of overtaking potential. Most of the circuits are new to me this year and out of the all of them this has been my favourite one to learn.”

Augusto FARFUS, Alfa Romeo Racing Team – 3rd fastest

“I had a few problems with my car this morning and so we tried different changes with the set-up. In the practices I was fighting just to get a good pace but in qualifying I was fighting for pole so what we changed worked. I tried my best and looking at the times it’s really close so I am happy. The most important thing is we have four cars at the front and I hope it is a good race for Alfa Romeo. BMW may not be starting at the front of the grid but in the race I think they will be strong towards the end. The final laps will be hard for us but I want to keep ahead for the entire race.”



Stéphane ORTELLI, Team Oreca Playstation – 5th fastest

“My qualifying position is one better than in Oschersleben but this track is more difficult because it is longer, and the difference new tyres make is not as significant. If you look at my results from this morning I was not expecting to be behind all the Alfas but I can’t complain. I am very happy and positive. I’m sure tomorrow will be an exciting race because the track is wide enough for overtaking. I passed some Alfas in the Oschersleben races so I see no reason why this can’t happen again in Istanbul.”

Peter TERTING, SEAT Sport – 6th fastest

“That was not so bad! It’s important here to get a ‘tow’ from the car in front and all of us were trying really hard to do that; it was difficult but I think that, for me, it was okay. I’ll try to hold position in Race 1 and stay in the top six and then see what I can do in Race 2, but the second race is always harder and more risky and the important thing for all of us this weekend is to score some points. It’s been difficult to find the right set-up, but I think the performance is okay now.”

Andy PRIAULX, BMW Team UK – 7th fastest

“I’m really happy with my best lap because I had a good slipstream and made no mistakes, you can only go as fast as the machinery you have. At the moment the track does seem to favour the front wheel drive cars in qualifying conditions. I’m just hoping the consistency of the BMWs over the whole race will help us. We have some tyre problems we need to work on but we will see tomorrow because with lots of overtaking and the reverse grid anything can happen.”

Adriano DE MICHELI, JAS Motorsport – 11th fastest

“I have to say we were quite expecting this pole position in the Independent Trophy, because after the last races in Oschersleben we have seen that we can easily be at the top, as our car is really good. Obviously we are quite happy to be so high up the time sheet, and we are eager to fight with some of the works cars. It’s a new track, and we are still working to finalize the set-up.”