

Slovakia Ring, 24th August 2014

**Pole first wins of the season Volkswagen Castrol Cup!**  
**Lot of exciting duels and sporting emotions in 5 round at the Slovakia Ring**

Commentators gathered at the Slovakia Ring in admitted that the two Volkswagen Castrol Cup races brought more excitement than the competition of drivers in other racing series, which were hosted at Slovak track this weekend. Wide and fast Slovakia Ring track makes numerous overtaking maneuvers easier. As expected, the first race of the fifth round of the Volkswagen Castrol Cup brought a lot of excitement. Robertas Kupcikas kept his head cool and showed great racing tactics. Two laps before the finish line Lithuanian driver still was on 5th position. Thanks to reasonable use of the Push - to - Pass system Kupcikas left his rivals hopeless. Behind him came Jeffrey Kruger and Pawel Krezelok. In the second race spectators absolutely could not be bored as well. Kisiel, Kruger and Kupcikas had a great fight for podium spots, what gave us a great show, full of sportive and racing emotions.

**Qualifying session**

Qualifying session before two Sunday races were delayed over one hour. This was caused by rain, which paralyzed Blancpain Sprint Series race, which was scheduled before Volkswagen Castrol Cup qualifying. In these conditions it was experienced Maciek Steinhof who showed best pace on wet track.

Before qualifying it was obvious that all of 22 racing Golfs will go on wet weather tyres. Just before qualifying session started heavy rain almost stopped, and instead of this we had a light drizzle. It meant that, as time goes, conditions on the track might improve, as well as lap times.

Just from the beginning of the session it was Steinhof and Kupcikas who topped the lap times board. Both of them covered two fast laps on the very beginning of the session and went back to the pits. This time Steinhof was faster than Kupcikas, who lost 0,182 sec. to Krakow-born driver. Third place belonged to Jeffrey Kruger, but the gap between leader Steinhof and Kruger was more than half of the second. Jakub Litwin set fourth time (+ 0.794), while Pawel Krezelok – another driver from Szczecin – was 5th. Gosia Rdest manager to reach 15th spot and Jerzy Dudek kept his 17th position. Marcus Fluch, who won wet qualifying session at Hungaroring, this time didn't perform so well, as he manager to score 7th quickest time.

10 minutes before the end of the session Kupcikas went to the track again to try to beat Steinhof. Driver from Cracow responded quickly and went out of the pit lane a while after Kupcikas did. Meanwhile Marcus Fluch managed to beat fastest time of Jan Kisiel. This meant that Fluch mover from 7th to 6th position. Kupcikas drove very aggressive on his fast lap, he pushed really hard to beat Steinhof. This caused a small mistake – Lithuanian driver went a bit wide on the exit from one of the corners. Still, he managed to stay on the track and continue.

Soon track conditions improved what helped Michael Gadomski to set much better time. The driver of the yellow Golf with number 5 scored 6th time on his 7th lap of the session. This way Gadomski found himself in front of Fluch and Kisiel.

Marcin Prokop improved his pace lap by lap. Well-known journalist, who competes as a VIP driver, beaten Dominik Kotarba-Majkutewicz result and moved up to 20th position. At the forefront of Kupcikas struggled to drive faster lap than Steinhof, but his lap times were far from Steinhof's result. Also Kuba Litwin was the one who constantly tried to improve his result. Volkswagen Castrol Cup 2013 runner-up was significantly faster than Steinhof in the first sector of the track, but in next parts of Slovak circuit he could not keep up with Steinhof's pace.

Finally it was Maciek Steinhof who won qualifying session. Behind him came respectively: Kupcikas, Kruger, Litwin, Kręzelok, Gadomski, Fluch, Kisiel, Gelzinis and Rzepecki, who completed the top ten. Gosia Rdest manager to improve her and moved to 13th position. Right behind her came Jerzy Dudek

(14th). Marcin Prokop defended his position, and left Dominik Kotarba-Majkutewicz behind him. This means that Prokop will start first race from 20th position.

Pole position before second race belongs to Kupcikas. Further position on the grid took: Kruger, Steinhof Krężelok, Litwin, Fluch, Kisiel and Gadomski. Gosia Rdest improved her starting position from first race, as she will start from 12th spot. Meanwhile Jerzy Dudek second best time was a bit worse than first one. Former Real Madrid goalkeeper will begin the competition from 14th position. Martin Prokop will have the opportunity to practice overtaking maneuvers, as he scored 21th time.

#### **Quotes after qualifying session at Slovakia Ring:**

##### **Maciek Steinhof (race I – 1st on the grid, race II – 3rd on the grid):**

*- Many drivers set very good time at the very beginning of the session. I honestly do not know why, because at the beginning the track was wet than on the end. My first lap was nice, clean, and as a result - very fast. Next ones weren't so good, so I returned to the pits and made changes in car setup. However, I am very happy with the victory in qualifying, especially since I really like to drive on wet tarmac.*

##### **Michał Gadomski (race I – 6th on the grid, race II – 8th on the grid):**

*- At the beginning we were driving slowly to see how much grip do we have on the track. Nobody wanted to damage the car. Then I returned to the pits, I saw my result, and I decided to change a few things in my driving. I took a slightly different racing line, which proved to be faster and thus I was able to jump to sixth place. At the end of the track was a bit drier, but it did not make significant difference.*

##### **Paweł Krężelok (race I – 5th on the grid, race II – 4th on the grid):**

*- For the second time this season we have qualifying on wet tarmac and again I performed really well in such a difficult conditions. I am happy because I am close to the podium, so I will definitely fight for it. I would not mind if tomorrow it rained harder than it was today.*

#### **First race**

As expected, the first race of the fifth round of the Volkswagen Castrol Cup brought a lot of excitement. Robertas Kupcikas kept his head cool and showed great racing tactics. Two laps before the finish line Lithuanian driver still was on 5th position. Thanks to reasonable use of the Push - to - Pass system Kupcikas left his rivals hopeless. Behind him came Jeffrey Kruger and Paweł Krężelok.

Maciek Steinhof was leading the field for first 8 laps. Krakow-born driver used his pole position and entered the first corner as a race leader. Behind him, Kupcikas and Litwin entered right-hander almost at the same time. Kuba Litwin wanted to pass Kupcikas on the inside. Unfortunately it was too optimistic maneuvers. Poorly heated rear tires did not give Kuba enough grip and he was very close to spin. Thanks to his great reflexes Kuba managed to save himself and stay on the track, but he lost many positions.

On the next laps the most fascinating action happened behind Kupcikas who was second. Janek Kisiel began his efforts to get to the front. Last season Kisiel finished both races at Slovakia Ring in second place. Today he quickly advanced to 5th place. Also Jonas Gelzinis soon found himself in top three.

In the middle of the race Robertas Kupcikas began to lose positions. Gelzinis, who soon started to chase Steinhof, passed him. Fierce battle for third position continued between Jeffrey Kruger, Paweł Krężelok and Jan Kisiel. Soon Kupcikas fell to fifth place and instead of fighting for win he had to defend against Ales Jirasek. Czech driver was faster and faster with every lap.

Two laps before the finish Kupcikas' tactics began to work. Lithuanian driver was driving at the fifth position, but he still could use Push - to - Pass system 5 times. Meanwhile top four drivers did not have such a possibility. Time gaps between top drivers were marginal, so overtaking by Kupcikas was only a matter of time. Already in the ninth of the ten laps, Kupcikas became a leader. It was Jonas Gelzinis who tried to overtake leading Robertas but his effort was way too optimistic. Eventually Gelzinis went wide on the exit of the corner and lost five positions.

Last two lap were drama for former race leader. Maciek Steinhof was driving cleanly, saving the tyres, but as a leader he couldn't use the wind tunnel, as drivers behind him did. On the long straights Steinhof struggled to keep other guys behind him. He had to use Push - to - Pass system very often

to defend his position. Finally, the pole winner crossed the line fifth, but in the race he was classified at position number 4.

This change was a result of a collision between Ales Jirasek and Jan Kisiel. Kisiel who caused this collision received 15-seconds penalty. On one of the last corners, during the battle for third place, Jirasek was gently pushed out of the track by Kisiel, who was on the inside of the corner. As a result, the Czech driver went off track and almost got stuck in the gravel trap. Eventually Jirasek managed to return to the track, but any chance for a good result was gone.

Gosia Rdest scored 14th result. Once again Kuba Litwin was extremely unlucky. After the troubles in the first corner he rushed to catch up, but during one of the overtaking maneuvers Jerzy Dudek hit his car. It was the beginning of serious incidents on the track. Kuba's car was hit again. Due to this Kuba did not finish the race and was taken to the medical centre at the track, because he suffered some back pain. Finally Kuba went to the hospital for further medical checks.

Marcin Prokop reached the finish line, but he had a hot moment. On one of the corners, well-known journalist went wide straight into a gravel trap, but he was able to return to competition. Finally, Prokop crossed the finish line on 18th position, leaving Jerzy Dudek and Ales Jirasek behind.

#### Quotes after the 1st race:

##### **Marcin Prokop (20th in qualifying, 19th in race 1):**

*- I could not fight for better result, because the other players are out of my reach. Still, this race was great fun for me. In the wet I could believe that I can keep up with the rest, but on dry tarmac I had no chance to be as good as regular participants. Besides, I made too many mistakes. Anyway I'm glad that I reached the finish line, I brought the car to the finish and I wasn't lapped. Those were my goals for this race.*

##### **Jeffrey Kruger (3rd in qualifying, 2nd in race 1):**

*- In the middle of the race it looked like I have no chance for the podium finish. Then I started to use the Push - to - Pass system to chase drivers in front of me. I was a bit lucky, and I managed to finish second. In the second race I definitely want to keep as many Push - to - Pass uses as possible for the end of the race. I had no problems with tyre wear on the end of the race. The grip was a bit lower in the middle of the race.*

##### **Pawel Krzezelok (5th in qualifying, 3rd in race 1):**

*- The night before the race I could not sleep. I was thinking about the podium. The race was very exciting and levelled. I also had a bit of luck, because Janek Kisiel, who finished ahead of me, received penalty and lost many positions. In the second I race I will start from higher position, and I will do my best to go even faster and to finish on the podium again.*

#### Second Race

About half an hour before the second race it began to rain over 5,92-kilometer loop of Slovakia Ring. However, soon tarmac was getting drier and by the end it was not obvious which tyres should be chosen. Finally, after a test lap stewards decided that racing Golfs can go on slicks. Volkswagen Racing Poland technical team quickly changed the wheels on all cars and race could begin.

Kupcikas had a good start, but on the wide straight of Slovak track Lithuanian driver could not escape to far. Kupcikas did not have even a single second of calm race, because Jeffrey Kruger put constant pressure on Lithuanian driver. In fact, it is difficult to say which of these competitors lead the race. Kupcikas and Kruger swapped position literally few times on each lap. It was fantastic, clean fight of two amazing drivers.

This obviously was not the only one fight that afternoon. On further positions once again this season Maciek Steinhof and Paul Krzezelok clashed. Fifth was Kuba Litwin. The driver from Szczecin came back from the hospital and could start the race. Unfortunately, Kuba had problems with the car, which was quite badly damaged in first race. Golf number 21 was soon overtaken by cars with numbers 2 and 16, Kisiel and Fluch respectively.

Collision between Krzezelok and Steinhof opened the way to the podium for Jan Kisiel. 21-year-old from Warsaw started to chase Kupcikas and Kruger who were fighting in front of the field. In less than two laps Kisiel was already less than a second behind those two. By the end of the race there still

were two laps to go but Kisiel could use Push - to - Pass system four times while Kupcikas and Kruger only once. Eventually Kisiel won the race, while Kruger came second and Kupcikas took third podium spot.

In addition to Jakub Litwin, also Maciek Steinhof did not reached the finish line. His car suffered in a collision with Krężelok. Jerzy Dudek, this time without incidents, brought his car to finish on 15th position. Gosia Rdest passed the finish line on 12th place. For Martin Prokop race ended a little earlier than for other drivers. On the penultimate lap popular journalist went wide into the gravel trap. Unfortunately this time he could not get out of it.

#### **Quotes after the second race:**

##### **Dylan Pereira (9th in qualifying, 4th in race 2):**

*- I had a very good tyre pressure for the race. The car is very precise and, above all, handling was very neutral, both in low and high-speed corners. Before the last corner Marcus Fluch pushed me on the grass. Because of this I could not brake before the corner, and I entered this last corner in front of him. This, somewhat unintentional maneuver gave me fourth place.*

##### **Jan Kisiel (7th in qualifying, 1st in race 2):**

*- In the first race I received a penalty, so I was rally upset. I decided to calm down while we were waiting for the second race. Thanks to this I kept my head cool until the end of the race. The key to victory was not only the racing pace but also excellent tactics.*

##### **Robertas Kupcikas (1st in qualifying, 3rd in race 2):**

*- Throughout the race I tried to defend my position against Jeffrey Kruger. We had really hard, masculine, but fair and equal fight. At the end of the race my tires started to overheat, so it was difficult to defend against and Jeffrey and Janek, who caught us. However, I am pleased with the large number of points that won this weekend.*

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