



ROUNDS 1 & 2 – BRAGA, PORTUGAL QUALIFYING REPORT

JAMES THOMPSON FLIES TO POLE POSITION

Reigning European Touring Car champion James Thompson claimed pole position for tomorrow's Race 1 at Braga.

The Briton and his Hartmann Racing Honda Accord were forced to better the Super 2000 track record by 2.1 seconds in order to secure the top spot, beating stubborn opposition from the BMW cars of Kristian Poulsen and César Campaniço who were classified second and third with gaps of 0.07 and 0.15 seconds respectively.

In the Super 1600 class Jens Löhnig too had to push to the limit, improving his own lap times by two seconds to beat his fellow countryman Carsten Seifert.

Poulsen opened hostilities on his first lap out of the pits, clocking a provisional fastest lap of 1:23.791 that lasted only a few seconds before Thompson improved to 1:23.108. A few moments later Campaniço responded jumping on top with a lap of 1:23.064.

The time to pit for new tyres and Poulsen struck back, provisionally re-claiming pole position at 1:23.041. And yet again he was soon demoted by Thompson's new effort of 1:22.740.

Poulsen and Campaniço improved further in the late stages (to 1:22.811 and 1:22.894 respectively), cutting out the gap, but not enough to beat Thompson's time.

Michaël Rossi clocked the fourth fastest lap at 1:23.401, emerging as the fastest of the SEAT drivers, while Marin Čolak spoiled his last attempt crashing against a barrier at Turn 4.

The fight between Löhnig and Seifert for the S1600 pole saw the former setting an impressive 1:29.638 that placed his Ford Fiesta on the 11th spot of the grid for Race 1. The third contender, Florian Heitmeier, went off the track on his second attempt and did not rejoin.

As for Marcis Birkens, the only competitor in the Super Production class, he clocked only one valid time before his Honda Civic was forced back to the pits due to gearbox problems.

FOUR DIFFERENT DRIVERS TOPPED PRACTICE

The test and practice sessions held between Friday and Saturday morning showed extreme balance on top.

Four different drivers emerged as the fastest in the four different sessions, at the wheel of three different cars.

Reigning champion James Thompson and his Honda Accord set the pace in the first test session on a drying track with a lap of 1:25.011. The following test was wet and Ibrahim Okyay's BMW clocked the fastest time at 1:30.874.

Local boy César Campaniço, also in a BMW 320si, topped the third test under pouring rain in 1:30.477, while Marin Čolak's SEAT León was fastest in this morning's sunny practice with a lap of 1:24.679.

CARS' MINIMUM WEIGHTS FIXED IN SCRUTINEERING

After the end of the scrutineering, the FIA Technical Delegate published the list of the cars' minimum weights.

The two Honda Accord cars of Thompson and Engström are the heaviest of the field at 1170 kg, 20 kilos more than the SEAT León cars of Čolak, Sadredinov and Rossi.

The BMW 320si and 320i cars are all on 1140 kg, having been listed as "old cars" according to Appendix 1A) of the Sporting Regulations.

Braga Circuito Vasco Sameiro, Portugal – 27th / 28th March 2010

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Birken's Super Production Honda Civic weighs 1075 kg, while the three S1600 Ford Fiesta cars are the lightest at 1120 kg.

SUNDAY'S RACES LIVE ON EUROSPOORT 2

Braga's two 17-lap races will be broadcast live tomorrow on Eurosport 2.
Race 1 at 12:15 and Race 2 at 13:30 respectively (Central European Time).

DRIVERS' QUALIFYING QUOTES

James THOMPSON (Honda Accord) – Pole position in Super 2000

"It's nice to restart with a pole position. This is my first race after the accident in Macau last November and I spent most of the winter to recover. I was impressed by the pace of the BMW cars. I had to push to the limit to beat them and it will not be easy to do it again tomorrow, but I'm confident because the team worked very well in setting my car up. It should be very competitive on the race distance too."

Kristian POULSEN (BMW 320si) – 2nd in Super 2000

"I am very happy with my second place. This is my first time in Braga and I took my time to learn the track. It paid off because I was able to consistently improve my lap times and we have also worked a lot on the race set up. So I am confident."

César CAMPANIÇO (BMW 320si) – 3rd in Super 2000

"It was a very close qualifying today. I pushed very hard and I am satisfied, because I managed to improve my personal lap time here in Braga. Tomorrow we will have a couple of very tough and close races. I'm looking forward to them, because this is my home track and I would like to achieve a brilliant result."

Marcis BIRKENS (Honda Civic) – Pole position in Super Production

"I am disappointed, because I could not qualify properly. My car had a problem with the gear shifting and it was not possible to fix it in time. We will fix it for tomorrow, though. Obviously with no other competitors in the class my first goal is to finish the races, but I would also like to improve my pace compared to last year and fight with some of the slowest S2000 cars."

Jens LÖHNIG (Ford Fiesta ST) – Pole position Super 1600

"The team did an excellent job. They set the car up in the best way and it was easy for me to drive around and improve by two seconds compared to this morning. I think my car is very well balanced, so it should also be competitive in the races. I really hope to continue setting the pace and I am confident that we can fight for the title tomorrow."

2010 FIA EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CUP QUALIFYING RESULT

POS	NO	CL	DRIVER	NAT	CAR	TIME	LAPS	GAP	KPH
1	1	S20	James THOMPSON	GBR	Honda Accord Euro R	1:22.740	11		131.40
2	11	S20	Kristian POULSEN	DEN	BMW 320si	1:22.811	15	0.071	131.28
3	9	S20	Cesar CAMPANICO	POR	BMW 320si	1:22.894	9	0.154	131.15
4	12	S20	Michael ROSSI	FRA	SEAT Leon TFSI	1:23.401	11	0.661	130.35
5	2	S20	Tomas ENGSTROM	SWE	Honda Accord Euro R	1:23.462	14	0.722	130.26
6	3	S20	Marin COLAK	CRO	SEAT Leon 2.0 TFSI	1:23.651	11	0.911	129.96
7	8	S20	Timur SADREDINOV	RUS	SEAT Leon 2.0 TFSI	1:23.996	13	1.256	129.43
8	13	S20	Ibrahim OKYAY	TUR	BMW 320si	1:24.553	15	1.813	128.58
9	6	S20	Yuriy YPROTASOV	UKR	BMW 320i	1:26.895	15	4.155	125.11
10	7	S20	Leonid LPROTASOV	UKR	BMW 320i	1:28.492	14	5.752	122.85
QUALIFICATION MAXIMA						1:28.531			
72	S16	Jens LOEHNIG	GER	Ford Fiesta ST	1:29.638	11	6.898	121.28	
5	S20	Iryna PROTASOVA	UKR	BMW 320i	1:29.942	17	7.202	120.87	
71	S16	Carsten SEIFERT	GER	Ford Fiesta ST	1:30.822	16	8.082	119.70	
51	SP	Marcis BIRKENS	LAT	Honda Civic Type-R	1:32.360	4	9.620	117.71	
73	S16	Florian HEITMEIER	GER	Ford Fiesta ST	1:39.444	2	16.704	109.32	

Braga
Circuit Length = 3.0200 km.
Start: 15:00 End: 15:30

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