



MacauDaily 澳門每日時報®  
**Times**

SUPPLEMENT

TUE 14.11.2017

# WTCC RETURNS TO GUIA



Renato Marques

**T**HE FIA World Touring Car Championship (WTCC) is returning to the twisty turns and wide-open straight roads of the Guia Circuit in Macau, two years since the series was replaced by the TCR racing series.

Though the WTCC has now returned back to Guia, the series has not developed much in the past two years, with several manufacturers abandoning the series (at least as factory teams) and others paying little attention to major developments due to scarcity of competition and other reasons.

After two years away, the WTCC promises to return to Macau to “restore the famous Guia Race to its former glory,” although it seems there is not much glory left in the series itself, and it only gained a new life with the introduction of the new Volvo Polestar team that has “put a little salt on a barely warm soup.” Previously hosting the “Grand Finale” and the closing event of the WTCC season, Macau will now hold the penultimate weekend of the campaign, which will close in the hot sands of Qatar in a race under the moonlight.

Interestingly enough, the Championship this year had an unexpected twist when Portugal’s Tiago Monteiro from the Castrol Honda World Touring Car Team suffered a high speed accident during a routine test run in Barce-



Tiago Monteiro



Esteban Guerrieri



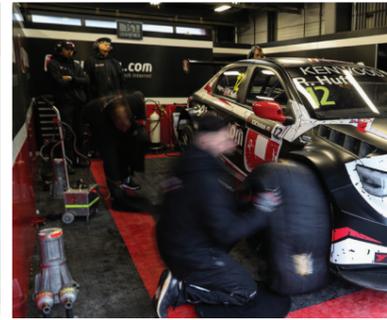
Tom Coronel



Thed Björk



Norbert Michelisz



Robert Huff

PREVIEW

## WTCC returns to Guia after 2 years

lona on September 6, where he was leading the championship at the time.

Monteiro had to be extracted from the car, and after observation by several specialists in the hospital, he was advised to skip the China and Japan rounds until he achieves full recovery.

Although he has accepted the physicians’ recommendations and started his recovery, Monteiro has been ruled out of the Macau round as well.

Similar to the Japanese round of the WTCC, the team has already announced that Monteiro will be replaced by Argentinian race driver Esteban Guerrieri.

Monteiro has lost the championship lead, due to not racing because of his injury, and fell to the fourth position behind new leader Thed Björk from Volvo, Honda teammate Norbert Michelisz and Volvo’s Nicky Catsburg. With four races left (2 in Macau and 2 in Qatar) and a

maximum of 120 points up for grabs, Michelisz trails Polestar Cyan Racing’s Björk by 16.5 points and Catsburg is just 2.5 points behind Michelisz.

Theoretically speaking, the chances of winning the championship are still wide-open and possible for the first nine classified, although success is more likely for the first six, adding Tom Chilton and Mehdi Bennani, respectively, to the list behind Monteiro.

Macau itself can be a tri-

cky place to race and small mistakes can result in big damage, which means that anything is possible and the races are expected to be contested to the last tenth of second.

Another point of interest in the return of the WTCC series is the possibility of well-known racer Rob Huff possibly extending his own record of wins in Macau to nine.

Huff will be driving a Citroën C-Elysée from ALL-INKL.COM Münnich Motors-

PREVIEW

## CTM Cup and Chinese Racing Cup add local and regional

Renato Marques

**B**ESIDES the four main races in the 64th Macau Grand Prix, local and regional drivers will have other opportunities to showcase their skills on the 6.2km-long Guia Circuit. The CTM Macau Touring Car Cup is one such race, and the majority of the racers are indeed from Macau and HK. For them, this is the final step of a racing season that started in early spring, with several rounds of the competition to select the year’s best competitors for a final race as a prize for their efforts.

This year’s Touring Car Cup, previously known for featuring small cars of similar competitive ability, will undergo a shift. It will shorten and merge



Billy Lo - 2.0T



Filipe de Souza - 1.6T



Alexander Funn

two previous competitions – the Macau Touring Car Cup and Macau Road Sport Challenge – into a single race

: the CTM Macau Touring Car Cup. It will include a combination of cars with different spe-

cifications, ranging between 1.6- and 2.0-liter turbocharged engines. Despite including both local and regional racers, the CTM Macau Touring Car Cup has not been well received by drivers, and has even

led some Grand Prix regulars to pull out from this year’s competition. Some drivers even cited fears of problems that might occur on the track, due to the greater number of cars and differences in vehicle performance.

To minimize such potential issues, the organizing committee has established a system in which the qualifying sessions of both categories will be held separately, with the best 18 racers in each group being se-

lected for the final race. In a racing season that featured four races in two weekend events, the entry lists for both groups have already been narrowed down to 25 per group, who will go out to the Guia track starting No-



Esteban Guerrieri



Tom Chilton



# Years of absence

port.  
 Another Macau expert that will be returning to the WTCC field is veteran racer Tom Coronel, who is definitely able to put his track experience to use and attain a good result on the street circuit. Participating out of the championship results will be a few local racers. Macau's Mak Ka Lok is one of them and he will be driving a third Lada Vesta from RC Motorsport, an entry that was initially supposed to be used by Macau's Filipe de

Souza. However, due to the regulations that prevent drivers from taking part in two different events during the Macau Grand Prix weekend, de Souza's focus for 2017 is the CTM Macau Touring Car Cup.

As for Hong Kong, Po Wah Wong and Clerebold Chan will be aboard two Chevrolet Cruzes and will be the representatives of Hong Kong in this race. They will both be racing under Campos Racing Team colors.



# onal DNA



g - 1.6T



Paul Poon - 1.6T

ember 16.  
 As for the favorites to win, last year's podium finishers in the 1.6T group Paul Poon (Peugeot RCZ), Filipe de Souza (Chevrolet Cruze) and Alexander Fung (Peugeot RCZ) are definitely in the mix,

along with Samson Fung (Peugeot RCZ), Leong Chi Kin and Célio Dias, both driving the Mini Cooper S.  
 As for the 2.0T cars, last year's winner Billy Lo (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution 7) remains the

favorite, heading a group that also includes Leong Ian Veng and Yam Chi Yuen, as well as last year's second runner-up Ng Kin Veng. Except for Lo, all team members are driving the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution 9.

## Chinese Cup 'evolves'

**COMPLETING** the program for the Macau Grand Prix is the Chinese Racing Cup, a standalone race and former one-brand series that aims to bring together drivers from mainland China, Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan in a "Greater China Racing Competition," as it was initially known. This competition has adopted the TCR (Touring Car Series) specifications for this edition, allowing the inclusion of several new Volkswagen Golf GTI, Audi RS3 LMS and one Seat Leon, along with the Baic Senova D50 cars. This is a significant evolution from the previously used Senova D70.

The race has also abandoned the idea of a "Chinese-only" competition, instead opting for a more diverse list that includes in total 36 drivers. One is from South Korea, a first for the race.

Another big difference is that this race, unlike before, is now part of a championship that is held across four rounds and seven races. The Macau race is only the second event of the racing program and not a "Season Finale" as in previous editions.

Due to these changes, it may be har-

der to pick a winner this year, though last year's winner David Zhu and last year's second runner-up Jason Zhang are in good positions – both are certainly skilled and experienced enough – to attack the podium. Also in the mix are Hélder Assunção and Deng Bao Wei, other strong performers from last year.

Notably, some very experienced drivers will participate this year – including Hong Kong's Kenneth Lau, Kenneth Look, Sunny Wong and Michael Choi – which will make this race much more interesting.



Renato Marques

**NICKNAMED** “Turbo Rabbit,” Glenn Irwin was a relatively unknown until his Macau debut last year, when he fought for a spot on the Macau Grand Prix podium after clocking third quickest in the qualifying session.

The rider – who hails from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland – stunned competitors and audience members alike when he took his Ducati to seventh place in the first qualifying session. He performed even better in the next session to secure a front-row start in his first appearance at the Guia Circuit, right behind eight-time Macau winner Michael Rutter. Irwin had a solid first season in the British Superbike Championship (BSB), securing his podium debut at the Thruxton race, and another one in the deciding race at Brands Hatch.

To learn more about Irwin’s experience and unexpected performance at last year’s Macau race, as well as what we can expect from him this time, the Times spoke to him ahead of the Macau Grand Prix.

**Macau Daily Times (MDT) - How did you feel about being so close to a podium finish in your debut year in Macau?**

**Q&A GLENN IRWIN  
MOTORCYCLE RIDER**

# ‘I feel like I can win the race’



**Glenn Irwin (GI) -** It was so weird. Usually in that situation, it would be very disappointing, but with it being such a dangerous race (due to the electrical failure of his motorcycle) it was also a relief I was coming home safe.

**MDT - After that first experience, what are your thoughts about the racetrack and race atmosphere?**

**GI -**The racetrack is very, very fun; very unique. The atmosphere is also really good, and the fans are cool and make a lot of noise from the grandstand!

**MDT - You are returning this year with added experience. What are you aiming for?**

**GI -**It’s hard to predict until we get some practice, but I feel like I

can win the race.

**MDT - How do you perceive the competition this year? Will Peter Hickman (Hicky) be the man to beat once more?**

**GI -**For sure, Hicky has the target on his back. He has been the main man for the last two seasons now. [Michael] Rutter will [also] be there as he is riding as

good as ever and [Martin] Jes-sop is still chasing the first win. It won’t be easy, that’s for sure.

**MDT - What is the most challenging factor of the Macau race?**

**GI -**For me, it’s definitely the heat and humidity. I can say that my favorite place is the hotel because of the air-conditioning [laughs].

AD

## NOVEMBER 16 - 19

### 16th of November (Thursday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 - 08:30 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Practice
- 08:50 - 09:20 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Practice
- 09:35 - 10:15 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 1
- 10:35 - 11:05 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo - Practice
- 11:20 - 11:50 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 1
- 12:25 - 12:55 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup over 1950cc - Practice
- 13:10 - 13:55 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Free Practice 1
- 14:10 - 14:50 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 1
- 15:40 - 16:25 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Qualifying
- 18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened

### 17th of November (Friday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 - 08:15 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Qualifying
- 08:25 - 08:55 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - Qualifying
- 09:15 - 10:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Free Practice 2
- 10:15 - 10:40 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo - Qualifying
- 11:00 - 11:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 2
- 11:45 - 12:25 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 2
- 12:40 - 13:05 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup over 1950cc - Qualifying
- 13:25 - 14:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Qualifying
- 14:50 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - MAC 3
- 15:25 - 16:05 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 2
- 16:25 - 16:55 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying
- 18:30 - 18:30 Circuit Opened

### 18th of November (Saturday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:30 - 08:30 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
- 09:00 - 10:00 Suncity Group Chinese Racing Cup - 10 laps
- 10:20 - 11:10 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualification Race - 10 laps
- 11:30 - 11:50 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - Warm Up
- 12:25 - 13:30 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race - 12 laps
- 14:10 - 15:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Opening Race - 8 laps
- 15:40 - 16:40 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 51 st Edition - 12 laps
- 18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened

### 19th of November (Sunday)

- 06:00 Circuit Closed
- 06:30 - 07:00 Circuit Inspection
- 07:00 - 07:50 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
- 08:00 - 08:30 Special Event
- 09:00 - 10:00 CTM Macau Touring Car Cup 1600cc Turbo and over 1950cc - 12 laps
- 10:40 - 11:40 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCC - Main Race - 11 laps
- 12:10 - 13:40 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - 18 laps
- 15:10 - 15:20 Lion Dance
- 15:30 - 16:30 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - 15 laps
- 18:00 - 18:00 Circuit Opened