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Nemoto and Tujula clinch Sprint title in dramatic finale

The 2020 season drew to a close for VSR this weekend at Vallenga where the final two races of the Italian GT Sprint Championship were held. Going into the double-header weekend both of the VSR Lamborghini crews still held a mathematical possibility to win the title. The crew of the 19 car – Nemoto and Tujula – were lying third, 14 points behind, and Kroes and Pulcini were fifth, 25 points off the lead.



The circuit was damp and slippery for the first qualifying session and Tujula put the 19 car on the second row in the final moment of the session, his best lap just 0.084 off the pole. Pulcini was close behind in the sister car, his fastest time good enough for fifth on the grid. Spots of rain were falling once again as the race started but the VSR drivers got away well with Tujula maintaining third and Pulcini slipping behind Cecotto to run in sixth. As the race progressed the track got greasier and the skies darker but there were no changes for position until lap ten when Drudi found a way past Tujula as the leaders started to lap the slower GT4 cars. On lap thirteen the pit window opened and VSR bought Tujula in immediately to hand the 19 car over to Nemoto. The pit-stop strategy worked well as a lap later the Safety Car was bought out to recover Mann's stricken Ferrari and Nemoto took over the race lead. Kroes, who had taken the 63 car from Pulcini on lap fifteen, found himself in third place with the BMW of Comandini sitting between the two VSR Lamborghinis. Racing went green again with just under fifteen minutes left and Nemoto streaked away from the field as Kroes made an

aggressive pass on Comandini to move into second place. Behind them several other Championship contenders hit trouble with Ferrari ending up in the wall after colliding with Roda. The accident caused a second Safety Car period which ran until the end of the race giving VSR their second 1-2 finish of the season. Nemoto and Tujula's points haul gave them the lead of the Championship with the final race in sight.



Intermittent, patchy rain showers made a lottery of qualifying for race two in which Kroes and Nemoto set the fourth and fifth fastest times, the two VSR Lamborghinis separated by only 0.080 seconds. Heavy rain saw the race delayed by an hour and then started behind the Safety Car which stayed on track for five laps. When the track went green the drivers picked their way gingerly around the course, Kroes and Nemoto quickly making progress and moving into second and third behind Marciello. The Safety Car came out again ninety seconds before the pit window opened so that a Ferrari Challenge could be rescued from the gravel. The VSR cars stopped immediately, served their success penalties from race one and when the pit window closed Pulcini was running fourth and Tujula sixth. On lap fifteen Moiseev spun out of the lead promoting them to third and fifth and three laps later Pulcini passed Cecotto for second. Tujula had his hands full defending from Drudi's Audi and on lap nineteen the Italian found a way past. Four laps later Tujula ran into the gravel after locking up and the Safety Car was called out for the final time. Pulcini took the chequered flag in second place, promoting himself and Kroes to third in the Championship standings whilst Nemoto and Tujula held on to their title lead despite finishing outside the points.

Photos by Fotospeedy