



Schendorff confirmed as 2019 International GT Open Pro-Am Champion

18th February 2020

After last month's hearing in front of the ICA in Paris the FIA announced on Friday the decision to uphold VSR's protest against the SPS Automotive team, disqualifying them from the Pro-Am results of the final race of the 2019 GT Open Championship and thus confirming Frederik Schendorff as Pro-Am Champion.



After he and team-mate Tujula had claimed three class victories from the previous four races Schendorff went into the final 2019 race at Monza with a three-point lead over his rivals for the Pro-Am title, SPS Automotive drivers Pierburg and Onslow-Cole. All Schendorff had to do was finish one place behind his rivals to ensure that he went home as Champion. Despite a significant success handicap to discount in the driver change, by the time the pit window closed Schendorff was just where he needed to be, running third in class, one place behind Pierburg and with a healthy gap to Griffin in the fourth placed Pro-Am car. Behind the VSR Lamborghini Crestani, in the Pro class SPS Automotive Mercedes, was the quickest man on track and as he wasn't fighting for Pro-Am honours Schendorff let him pass. Crestani then slowed deliberately and blocked Schendorff for two laps, driving erratically and dangerously

until Griffin was able to catch and pass the VSR driver, thus ensuring that Pierburg and Onslow-Cole stole the Pro-Am title.

VSR protested both Crestani and the SPS Automotive team at Monza and whilst the stewards awarded Crestani a post-race drive-through penalty for dangerous driving nothing was done to penalise the team for their unsporting behaviour which had allowed their Pro car to impede a competitor in order to benefit their Pro-Am car. VSR appealed the decision and the protests were re-heard first in Madrid and then in Paris where Sospiri and Schandorff were ably assisted by the Studio Legale of Avvocato Simone and Clay Arbitration. The FIA International Court of Appeal overturned the initial decisions and disqualified the SPS Automotive Pro-Am car from the results of the second race at Monza. A zero score for Pierburg and Onslow-Cole meant that Schandorff was finally acclaimed the 2019 International GT Open Pro-Am Champion after topping the table by six points.

Sospiri: I'm thrilled for Frederik and the whole team and delighted that justice has been done. I have been involved in racing all my life but I have never been prouder than I am today of our governing body, the FIA, who with this ruling have proved that fair play and sportsmanship are still core values in the motorsport community and principles to be upheld by us all.

Schandorff: I am really happy that there is still justice in motorsport and that the FIA take something like this seriously. Also, a big thank you to Vincenzo for supporting me 100% in this and never giving up until we got the result the whole team deserved.

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