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Podiums and Penalties at Monza

The penultimate round of the Italian GT Sprint Championship took place at Monza this weekend and VSR entered an unchanged driver line-up for its two Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo cars with Yuki Nemoto and Tuomas Tujula behind the wheel of the 19 car and Danny Kroes and Leonardo Pulcini sharing the 63 car.



Qualifying for race one saw Tujula and Pulcini in action for VSR. Tujula put the 19 Lamborghini on the second row with Pulcini further back on row five but the Finnish driver was swamped when the lights turned green and Pulcini slotted into fourth place after an aggressive opening lap. A pass on Roda at the Parabolica put Tujula ninth but for the rest of his stint he was stuck behind Frassinetti and Cressoni as further up the road Pulcini battled to hold off an attack from Zug's BMW. The pit window opened on lap twelve and Tujula swooped into the pits immediately to hand over to Nemoto. Pulcini stayed out for two more laps before stopping so Kroes could take over the 63 car. The pair had a ten second success penalty to discount from the last race and rejoined the race in sixth just behind Agostini in the Audi. When the pit window closed Nemoto had moved up to third and on lap eighteen he passed Vezzoni for second and set about trying to close the four second gap to Comandini's BMW. On the same lap Kroes overtook Marcucci for fifth place but a technical issue hampered his progress and he was back in sixth when the chequered flag fell. As the sun began to set the race entered the final ten minutes and Nemoto, pushing hard to get to Comandini, had

Agostini's Audi looming large in his mirrors. On lap twenty-two a small mistake from Agostini at the first chicane combined with Nemoto's ruthless overtaking of the slower GT4's gave the Japanese driver a breather and by the penultimate lap he had shaken off the Audi. He closed the gap to Comandini to less than one second before the chequered flag came out but wasn't close enough to attempt a pass, settling instead for a hard fought second place.



Nemoto and Kroes took part in the second qualifying session and the Japanese driver took another second row start for the 19 car whilst Kroes qualified in seventh. Nemoto pulled alongside third placed Comandini at the start and made it past the BMW as the field streamed into the first chicane. Kroes made a move on Galbiati which ended badly for the Imperiale driver who finished his race in the wall and bought out the safety car for three laps. At the restart the positions remained static with Nemoto running in third and Kroes in fifth until the pit window opened on lap ten. Kroes stopped first and Pulcini jumped into the 63 car. Nemoto pitted one lap later and handed over to Tujula after discounting a ten second success penalty from race one. By lap eighteen Pulcini was the fastest man on track and visibly eating into the gap to Roda in second place. Three laps later he was close enough to strike and pulled a beautiful pass into the Parabolica to take second. Tujula in fourth had closed to within three seconds of Roda when a crash amongst the backmarkers bought out the safety car once again. Racing resumed with one lap left and Pulcini was quick to make his mark, taking the lead from Ferrari as the field raced down the straight. The dice for the remaining podium places was fierce and as Tujula made a move on Ferrari he clashed with the Mercedes driver who spun into the gravel. Pulcini took the flag first but a five second penalty for Kroes's move on Galbiati at the start of the race denied him victory and pushed him down to fourth. Tujula crossed the line in third but was later penalised for the incident with Ferrari and was classified seventh.

The Sprint Championship will conclude at the beginning of December with a final double header event at Vallelunga.

Photos by Fotospeedy