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Giammaria, Nemoto and Pulcini race to second at Vallelunga

Vallelunga hosted the penultimate race of the Italian GT Endurance Championship this weekend. Car 63's driver line-up was unchanged with Danny Kroes, Frederik Schandorff and Tuomas Tujula racing with a twenty-second success penalty from the previous round. In the number 19 car Japan's Yuki Nemoto replaced Aghakhani and shared the driving with locals Raffaele Giammaria and Leonardo Pulcini.



Both crews achieved their best qualifying performance to date with the number 19 Lamborghini starting third and the 63 car alongside it in fourth. Kroes made a blinding start, getting ahead of Agostini's Audi to slot into second but Pulcini was slow away and fell back to sixth behind Di Amato. On lap three the Audi pitted with a tyre issue, a problem which would afflict several other front runners as the race progressed. Pulcini was quick to make up the ground he lost at the start, passing Di Amato and then setting about closing the five second gap to Ferrari's Mercedes. By lap fifteen he had caught the Mercedes and also Kroes in the sister Lamborghini who was suffering with a tyre problem. One lap later Pulcini passed them both to move into second and Kroes pitted for a new rear tyre. The Dutchman rejoined in ninth place and showing a good turn of speed quickly caught and passed Mann before starting to chase down Michelotto and Roda.



The first pit window opened on lap thirty-six. Pulcini pitted one lap later and Giammaria took over the number 19 Lamborghini for the second stint. On the same lap Kroes, who had just passed Michelotto for seventh ran into the gravel. Seven laps passed before the Lamborghini was extricated and by then all hopes of a points finish for the 63 car were lost.



On lap forty-eight tyre problems claimed another victim and the Championship leading Ferrari was forced to pit, falling off the lead-lap in the process. Giammaria continued

unperturbed and was frequently the fastest man on track, closing the gap to Galbiati in the lead to just fifteen seconds by the end of his stint. On lap seventy-three the second pit window opened and Nemoto took over from Giammaria for a trouble-free run to the flag. The Japanese driver, along with Venturini out front and Sims behind, was the fastest on track and after an accomplished drive Nemoto took the flag just six seconds behind Venturini to claim a fine second place for himself, Giammaria and Pulcini.

The Endurance Championship will conclude in November at Monza but the VSR Lamborghinis will be back in action in a fortnight's time at Mugello for round two of the Sprint Championship.

Photos by Fotospeedy