



Fuji podiums keep title hopes alive for Au and Schandorff

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A double podium weekend for Alex Au and Frederik Schandorff at Fuji Speedway this weekend keeps them in the hunt for Pro-Am glory in this year's Blancpain GT World Challenge Asia. Two third place finishes them trailing the leaders by five points with four races left.



There was a bumper grid of thirty-one cars at Fuji Speedway this weekend as the Blancpain GT World Challenge Asia headed into the second half of the season. Friday's free practice sessions were run in cool, overcast weather but a wet track met the drivers early on Saturday morning for Official Practice. Au was once again impressive in the difficult conditions, setting the fastest time in the first half of the session and finishing up third fastest overall. The track was dry again for qualifying and Au was first out. He set his best time with just two minutes left, jumping to second in Pro-Am and earning a place on row three.

Despite a frenetic first lap Au maintained his place at the start but a lap later was passed by Silver Cup driver Chen. Right behind him was his main Championship rival Inthrahuvasak and on lap three the Porsche driver ran into the back of Au,

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eliminating himself from the race and damaging the rear floor of the VSR Lamborghini. Two laps later Bhirombhakdi managed to put his McLaren ahead of Au and on lap six Bo, also in the Silver Cup class, overtook. When the pit window opened Au was running ninth overall, third in pro-Am and was maintaining a gap of just over a second to Tjiptobiantoro's Ferrari. Both cars pitted on lap fifteen and Schandorff took over the VSR Lamborghini. He had an untroubled run to the chequered flag and pulled out a ten second gap to Haryanto who had taken over the wheel of the pursuing Ferrari. The fifth podium of the season for Au and Schandorff pushed them briefly back into the lead of the Pro-Am Championship.



Schandorff qualified the VSR Lamborghini for Sunday's race and in an extremely competitive session which saw over half the GT3 grid covered by less than a second took a place on row six. He was up to tenth by the end of the first lap and then enjoyed a thrilling dice with Van der Drift and Sakamoto which saw them run three abreast down the main straight. By lap six the front of the field was an all Mercedes affair and Schandorff was running well in the second group of Pro-Am cars, holding ninth. On lap ten he overtook Van der Drift and then set about chasing down Kamimura ahead. When the pit window opened all the Pro-Am cars stayed out. Kamimura was the first to stop on lap eighteen and one tour later Schandorff handed over to Au. The VSR Lamborghini driver exited straight into a battle with Nagai, Tan and Seefried which was halted on lap twenty-five when the safety car was called out to clear up a collision. Racing resumed with less than ten minutes left and profiting from other driver's errors as well as late race penalties Au hauled the Lamborghini up to sixth overall, third in Pro-Am.

The penultimate round of the Championship will take place in August at the Yeongam circuit in Korea.

Photos by Fotospeedy