Victory for Cazzaniga-D'Amico and double podium for Liang-Ortiz tightens up Championship fight

24th September, 2017 – Italian Super GT Championship, Vallelunga

Cazzaniga and D'Amico took a hard fought win on Saturday to keep themselves in the hunt for the Super GT Championship. Two podium finishes for Liang and Ortiz mean just six points now separate the three VSR crews as we head to Mugello for the season finale.

Cazzaniga-D'Amico took a fine victory on Saturday (photo credit: Fotospeedy)

The penultimate round of the Italian GT Championship was held at Vallelunga this weekend. VSR entered three cars for Liang-Ortiz, Tujula-Vainio and Cazzaniga-D'Amico. The Finnish pair of Tujula-Vainio were once more fastest in both free practice sessions but it was Desideri, still in contention for the title, who took pole for Saturday's race. Tujula earned himself a place on the front row whilst directly behind him on row two would start Cazzaniga with Liang a further row behind.

When the lights went green Desideri quickly took control of the race while behind him Tujula and Cazzaniga squabbled over second place. The duel lasted for the first two laps of the race before Tujula managed to break free and head off in pursuit of Desideri. Setting fastest lap along the way Tujula got to within 1.4 seconds of Desideri before the pit window opened. The first VSR car to stop was Liang who had been running in 6th place. Ortiz took over from the Chinese driver and two laps later Cazzaniga, who had a ten second success penalty to discount, passed third place over to D'Amico. Tujula was the last VSR car to come into the pits. He and Vainio had an agonisingly long thirty second success penalty following their double victory in the previous round so slipped down the order. Just before the pit window closed Desideri handed the lead to Necchi but a technical problem halted the car on its out lap. The subsequent safety car closed the field up but at the restart D'Amico, now the leader, was quick to pull out a gap over the rest of the field. Ortiz made it up to third and in the closing stages a penalty for Perullo allowed him to take second. Vainio finished fourth, reducing his car's success penalty for Sunday's race to a more manageable fifteen seconds.

Liang-Ortiz finished on the podium in both races (photo credit: Fotospeedy)

Vainio took a convincing pole for Sunday morning's race and was closely followed by the other two VSR cars. D'Amico, just two tenths off pole claimed a front row start and Ortiz set the third quickest time. The three drivers held formation during the first half of the race and despite a three lap safety car managed to pull out a nine second advantage over the rest of the field, led by Perullo, before the pit window opened. D'Amico was first to stop, handing over to Cazzaniga as the pair discounted their significant success handicap of twenty-five seconds. Two laps later Tujula took over from Vainio, losing the lead due to their own fifteen second success handicap and a lap later Ortiz pitted from the head of the field and Liang got behind the wheel of his Huracan. The second half of the race was characterised by penalties and a final safety car intervention which caused some confusion amongst the drivers when

the lead car pealed into the pits just before the chequered flag came out. Liang took third with Cazzaniga right behind him in fourth whilst Tujula was classified in sixth despite finishing the race in the pit-lane.

Tujula-Vainio had pole on Sunday and still lead the Championship (photo credit: Fotospeedy)

With one round left to go the situation at the top of the driver's championship couldn't be closer. Taking into account the results which have to be dropped according to the sporting regulations the Finnish pair of Tujula-Vainio hang on to a slim lead of just two points from team-mates Cazzaniga-D'Amico. Liang-Ortiz, a further four points back, complete a VSR 1-2-3 whilst Desideri remains in the running, twenty points behind Tujula-Vainio.

The Championship concludes in a fortnight at Mugello.

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