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Italian GT Sprint Championship, Round 1 – Misano, Italy

VSR opens Italian campaign with victory and a hat-trick of podiums

The Italian GT Championship kicked off this weekend with two action packed races at Misano. A record entry of 53 cars meant the GT3 and Cup cars were separated for qualifying and the races. VSR entered three Lamborghini Huracán GT3s – the Pro 19 car for Cazzaniga and Di Folco, the Pro-Am 63 car for Fabi and Moulin and the Pro 66 car for Michelotto and Stadsbader. In GT Cup the team's Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo number 163 was driven by Tribaudini and Zanon in Pro-Am.



(#19 – Cazzaniga / Di Folco: photo by Fotospeedy)

Saturday morning qualifying saw Michelotto take the first pole of the season, beating Marschall's Fach Auto Tech Porsche by over three tenths of a second. Cazzaniga parked the 19 car on row three and Moulin was fourth fastest in Pro-Am. Three red flags in the first GT Cup session caused chaos and Tribaudini qualified on the second row of a topsy-turvy grid.



(#63 – Fabi / Moulin: photo by Fotospeedy)

Michelotto made the perfect getaway at the start of Saturday's GT3 race and began to immediately pull out a gap to the rest of the field. Cazzaniga made up a place at the start but had his mirrors full of Klingmann's BMW whilst Moulin held fourth in class. Setting fastest lap along the way Michelotto was five seconds ahead when the pit window opened. First to pit was Cazzaniga who had broken away from the BMW and handed his Lambo over to Di Folco. Moulin was in a lap later for Fabi whilst Michelotto stayed out until lap twenty before pitting for Stadsbader. When the pit window closed Di Folco was up to third and involved in a fierce battle with Boguslavsky and Hesse which lasted until the chequered flag. Fabi ran in eighth, second in class, and closed up to the class winner Blattner as his stint progressed. Stadsbader went on to win with a three second margin, claiming victory on his debut GT3 race. Di Folco secured third on a great day for VSR and Lamborghini, and Fabi celebrated his first GT3 experience with second in class.

The first race for the GT Cup cars was a chaotic affair. Tribaudini was pushed out by Desideri on the first lap, initially dropping back to seventh and then having to pit with a puncture. He rejoined and showed what might have been by setting the fastest lap of the race before handing the 163 over to Zanon. The Italian enjoyed an eventful stint as he made his way back into the points to eventually finish ninth in class.



(#66 – Michelotto / Stadsbader: photo by Fotospeedy)

Di Folco was the fastest VSR car in the second qualifying session, taking a place on the second row with Stadsbader three rows further back and Fabi second fastest in Pro-Am. In the second GT Cup session Zanon stole pole position from Scionti in the dying minutes, going fastest by just three hundredths of a second.

Di Folco briefly held second on the opening lap of race two before falling back behind Hesse as the cars completed their first tour. A stop and go penalty for race leader Denes promoted Di Folco to second and the retirement of Moncini's Audi meant both Stadsbader and Fabi gained two places. The pit window opened on lap fourteen and the first to stop was Stadsbader, handing over to Michelotto with an additional fifteen seconds of success handicap. Next in was Fabi from Moulin and a lap later, Di Folco, who had held off Trulli for most of his stint, pitted. Cazzaniga took over the 19, keeping the car stationary for an additional nine seconds of success handicap. When the pit window closed Cazzaniga was running fifth, Moulin eighth and Michelotto, the fastest man on track, was ninth having worked his way back up into the points. On lap twenty-three Moulin and Michelotto swapped places and ran together to catch up to the next group. Ahead of them Cazzaniga was scrapping with Di Amato as they reeled in Biagi and Nurmi. As the race reached the final minutes the battle for third was enthralling as Cazzaniga diced with the three Ferraris. With two laps to go Michelotto passed Ebrahim and caught the battle for third as Di Amato eliminated Nurmi, an action which earned him a post-race penalty. Cazzaniga finished fourth, just four tenths off a second podium finish of the weekend and Michelotto fifth. Moulin bought the 63 home in eighth place, claiming second in Pro-Am, just one second behind class winner Ebrahim.



(#163 – Tribaudini / Zanon: photo by Fotospeedy)

At the start of the second GT Cup race Zanon, starting from the pole, was beaten to the first corner by Scionti who was later penalised for a jump start. After a short Safety Car period racing resumed and Scionti and Zanon were quick to pull away from the rest of the field. By the time the pit window opened they had a six second lead to Hancock who headed the rest of the field. At the halfway point Zanon pitted for Tribaudini and the Frenchman sprinted away into the lead of the race, setting fastest lap and pulling out a crushing thirty-four second gap by the time the chequered flag fell.

The Sprint Championship continues in a month's time with a double-header at Imola. VSR heads into round two with Michelotto and Stadsbader leading the overall GT3 standings.

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