

**PRESS RELEASE:** 7th May 2023

## **VSR's season gets off to a flying start with victories and podiums at Misano**

The 2023 season officially got underway this weekend with the first round of the Italian GT Sprint Championship, held at Misano. A successful event saw VSR rack up one pole, two victories, three podium finishes, three points finishes and one fastest lap.

Sospiri's team entered three Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo 2 cars and two Lamborghini Super Trofeos in the event. All three of the Lambo GT3's were in the Pro class with Moulin and Llarena pairing up in the number 19 car, Cazzaniga and Petrov in the 60 car and Liberati and Michelotto in the 63. The Super Trofeos were driven by Stadsbader in Pro-Am and Zanon in Am.

The categories were divided for qualifying and the races with all four qualifying sessions taking place early on Saturday morning. Liberati was the fastest of the VSR GT3 boys on track in Q1, setting a time good enough for the third row. Petrov and Moulin made it an all VSR row five. Stadsbader was the star of the first of the GT Cup qualifying sessions. The Belgian youngster, making his GT Cup debut, set the fastest time of the twenty-nine cars on track and claimed pole for race one. Zanon was close behind, third fastest of the Am drivers to take a place on row four.



#63 - Edoardo Liberati / Mattia Michelotto (photo by Fotospeedy)

At the start of the opening GT3 race Liberati was quick to make up a place, passing Nurmi's Ferrari for fifth. The positions throughout the field remained static until lap seven when Petrov was passed by Sandrucci for eighth. The Israeli driver got the place back just before the pit window opened. He then dived in for a drive change on lap fifteen, closely followed by Moulin who had been running just a few tenths behind him. Cazzaniga and Llarena took over the Lamborghinis and two laps later Liberati pitted for Michelotto. The Italian was quick to pass Colucci and Castro to move into fourth and start hunting down a podium. As the race entered the final ten minutes he had reduced the gap to Spengler and D'Auria to just two seconds. A desperate move from D'Auria on lap twenty-seven tipped Spengler into a spin and Michelotto was able to pass them both to take second. Cazzaniga moved up to sixth during his stint and a penalty awarded to D'Auria for his collision with Spengler promoted the 60 car to fifth. A track limits penalty for Moulin and Llarena dropped them down the order to twelfth when the chequered flag fell.



#163 – Gilles Stadsbader (photo by Fotospeedy)

The first GT Cup race was dominated by Stadsbader who took a lights to flag victory from pole position. Despite having an extra five seconds handicap for racing alone he was never headed and held off a last minute challenge from the vastly more experienced Pera to take victory for VSR. Zanon finished eighth overall, third in the Am class, recording a fine podium finish in his Italian GT debut.





#60 – Riccardo Cazzaniga / Artem Petrov

The grid for Sunday's races was decided by Q2 and it was Cazzaniga who led the way, setting the third fastest time with Michelotto in fifth and Llarena ninth fastest. Stadsbader was beaten to his second pole of the weekend by the experienced Pera and had to settle for a front row start instead. Zanon was the fifth fastest Am driver and qualified on row six.



#206 – Ignazio Zanon (photo by Fotospeedy)

At the start of the second GT3 race Cazzaniga became quickly embroiled in a battle with Spengler which ended when the BMW driver pushed the VSR Lambo wide to steal third place. Michelotto fell back to seventh at the start, just ahead of Llarena. On lap five Michelotto passed Greco for sixth and was the fastest man on track as he hunted down Denes in fifth. Llarena found a way past Greco on lap ten whilst Cazzaniga continued to harrass Spengler for third. Just before the pit window opened Michelotto took fifth from Denes and on lap nineteen he pitted for Liberati but their success handicap from race one pushed them down the order. A lap later both Cazzaniga and Llarena stopped and when the pit window closed Petrov was running in second, Moulin fourth and Liberati sixth. Moulin had Antonelli behind him and the pair battled side by side for most of a lap before the Mercedes completed the pass. On lap twenty-six Moulin and Liberati inverted their positions. Despite his best efforts Petrov couldn't get close enough to White to try for a pass and took the chequered flag in second place, just over two seconds behind the Ferrari. Liberati finished fifth and Moulin sixth.



#19 – Mateo Llarena / Baptiste Moulin

A scrappy start to the second GT Cup race saw Stadsbader hold second as several cars skated into the gravel and the Safety Car was brought out for three laps. At the restart he was immediately the quickest man on track as he kept the gap to Pera to just under one second. Zanon made good progress in the first half of the race, gaining two places and running fourth in Am before the pit window opened. He boxed on lap thirteen, discounted a fourteen second handicap, and rejoined. Five laps later Stadsbader was in for his stop and to discount his twenty second handicap. A short three lap Safety Car period after the pit window closed bunched the field up again and gave both VSR drivers a good opportunity to finish well. On lap twenty-five Stadsbader took the race lead from Di Giusto and pulled away to take his second win of the weekend. Zanon had made it up to second in Am by lap twenty-six and three laps later passed Menichini for the class lead. Zanon's Am class victory completed a fine weekend for the whole team.

The next Italian GT Sprint race will be in June at Monza whilst VSR will be back on track next weekend for the opening round of the GT World Challenge Sprint Championship at Brands Hatch.

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