Schandorff and Tujula win again at Silverstone

8th September, 2019 – International GT Open, Silverstone

Frederick Schandorff and Tuomas Tujula came away from the Silverstone round of the International GT Open with one class win and one podium to celebrate. With four races left to go Schandorff holds second in the Pro-Am standings.

Found five of the International GT Open took place at Silverstone this week and once again VSR fielded a Pro-Am entry for Frederik Schandorff and Tuomas Tujula. Going into the weekend Schandorff was second in the Pro-Am standings trailing last year's Champions by ten points. A new qualifying format was introduced for the weekend giving both drivers fifteen minutes in each session. Schandorff was third quickest in the opening session on Saturday, which was marred by a red flag after just five minutes, and when Tujula's best lap in the second session was factored in the VSR drivers took a place on row four, just behind their Championship rivals Onslow-Cole and Pierburg.

Schandorff made a fine start and got ahead of Pierburg but disaster struck halfway round the first lap when Wilkinson hit the VSR Lamborghini, tipping it into a spin. The out of control Aston Martin then struck the Ombra entered Lamborghini which hit the front of Schandorff's car as he spun around. The Safety Car was called out and twenty-four minutes of racing were lost while the accidents were cleared up. Schandorff rejoined the race in last place with damage to the left front of the VSR Lamborghini and when the circuit went green on lap eight

began working his way back through the field. After passing Da Costa, Roda and Cipriani in quick succession he was running right behind Pierburg when the pit window opened. Pierburg pitted his Mercedes immediately and two laps later Schandorff gave his Lamborghini to Tujula who exited second in Pro-Am, behind Giammaria but ahead of Pierburg's team-mate Onslow-Cole and fellow British driver Griffin. The local drivers were soon scrapping hard but their battle was put on ice when the safety car was deployed a second time to clear up the mess from Roda's blown-up Mercedes. Racing resumed with fourteen minutes to go and Tujula held off the charging Onslow-Cole for four laps before the Mercedes driver found a way past. For the final two laps of the race Tujula's mirrors were full of the Ferrari pair of Griffin and Hancock but he kept his Lamborghini ahead of the local drivers, taking the chequered flag third in class with the Ferraris less than a second behind him.

The results of the combined qualifying sessions on Sunday morning gave the VSR drivers a starting position on row five for race two, right alongside Onslow-Cole. At the start the Brit got the jump on Tujula but a mistake on lap three dropped him down the order leaving Tujula battling with Griffin for the Pro-Am lead. They were both blocked for several laps behind the BMW of Visser until Griffin made his way past on lap eight. By then Onslow-Cole had recovered from his earlier mistake and was hounding Tujula. The two were covered by less than a second until the pit window opened and Tujula dived in to give the VSR Lamborghini to Schandorff. Six laps later Griffin and Onslow-Cole pitted from the Pro-Am lead and when the pit window closed Schandorff was lying second in class, twelve seconds behind Griffin's team-mate Cameron. One of the fastest on track during the second stint Schandorff ate up the gap and after slicing past Gonda in the BMW on lap twenty-four was right with Cameron as the race entered the final five minutes. The battle for Pro-Am honours was quickly resolved in Schandorff's favour and he took the chequered flag on lap thirty claiming his and Tujula's second victory this season.

Schandorff's points haul from the Silverstone weekend leaves him trailing Onslow-Cole and Pierburg in the Pro-Am championship by ten points having extended the gap to Giammaria and Liang in third to a healthy twenty-three points. The International GT Open Championship continues at Barcelona in a fortnight's time.

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