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## **VSR OPENS ITALIAN CAMPAIGN WITH CLEAN SWEEP AT PERGUSA**

### **Italian GT Endurance Championship - Round 1, Pergusa**

The 2022 Italian GT Endurance got underway this weekend with a two-hour race at the historic circuit of Pergusa in Sicily. VSR entered two Lamborghini Huracán GT3 cars in the Pro class and one in Pro-Am. The number 19 Pro car was driven by Michele Beretta, Edoardo Liberati and Yuki Nemoto whilst the 63 Pro car was in the hands of Karol Basz, Benjamin Hites and Mattia Michelotto. Andrea Cola and Baptiste Moulin paired up in the Pro-Am entry.



#19 – Beretta, Liberati, Nemoto (photo by Kakophotography)

Testing on Friday gave the drivers the opportunity to learn the fast, tight circuit in time for Saturday afternoon's qualifying sessions. Out first, after a long wait for circuit repairs, were Nemoto, Basz and Moulin. A red flag for Patrese's Ferrari, stopped on its out lap, interrupted the session early on and left the VSR drivers twelve minutes to set a time. Nemoto blitzed the opposition to set the quickest time in his session by nearly half a second with Basz third fastest and Moulin quickest in Pro-Am. The second qualifying session was ultra-competitive and saw Beretta pipped to the pole at the last minute by Moncini's Honda. Hites was fourth fastest and Cola fourth in Pro-Am. The final session was red-flagged twice leaving the top Pro drivers with just seven minutes to set a time. A thrilling end to qualifying saw Liberati, Michelotto and Galbiati swap fastest laps until the chequered flag fell. The Mercedes driver

got the better of the two Lambos on his final run with Michelotto ending up second, just ahead of Liberati.



#63 – Basz, Hites, Michelotto (photo by Fotospeedy)

Aggregate times set the grid for Sunday's two-hour race and the strong performances of all six of the VSR Pro drivers put the 19 car on pole with the 63 Lamborghini alongside in second. The Pro-Am car lined up on row three, second in class. A flying start from Liberati saw him retain the lead while Basz was passed by Guidetti as the field headed into a chaotic first corner. In the melee Moulin dropped down the field, falling back to fifteenth overall. By lap five Moulin had recovered to tenth as up front Liberati was working hard to keep Guidetti and Basz behind him. On lap eight a Full Course Yellow period followed by the Safety Car neutralised the race as debris was collected from the track. Racing resumed nine minutes before the first pit window and Basz was quick to move up to second, passing the Honda cleanly on the inside. The two VSR Pro cars, swapping fastest laps, pulled out a four second gap to Guidetti before the pit window opened on lap sixteen. Moulin, who had moved up to seventh, second in class, was the first VSR car to stop and Cola took over for the middle stint of the race. Liberati stopped on lap twenty-five and Beretta took over the 63 car. Basz pitted two laps later for Hites, just before the pit window closed, and on the same lap Cola passed Rappange's Mercedes to take the Pro-Am class lead. The two VSR Pro Lambos, this time with the 63 ahead, continued to lead the race with the Honda in hot pursuit as the halfway point approached. On lap thirty-six Beretta moved ahead of Hites as the Honda began to close in on the two Lamborghinis. The second pit window opened on lap thirty-nine and Cola pitted two laps later so Moulin could finish the race. By lap forty-five Moncini was close enough to attack Hites but the Chilean driver fended him off to keep second. Their fight allowed Beretta to pull out a small gap as behind him Hites pitted for Michelotto. Beretta pitted from the lead



on lap fifty and Nemoto joined the race for the final thirty-minute run to the flag. During the pit-stops the Honda managed to insert itself between the two VSR cars and Michelotto and Cabezas squabbled over second as they reeled in Nemoto. On lap sixty-one Moulin caught and passed Coluccio to move into fifth overall as the battle for the lead became increasingly intense. With five laps to go the top three were covered by one single second and as Nemoto, hampered by a slow puncture, switched to defensive mode a mistake by Cabezas allowed Michelotto to slip past into second. On the penultimate lap Michelotto attempted to wrest the lead from Nemoto but this allowed Cabezas through before another error from the Honda let Michelotto reclaim second. A thrilling last lap saw the three drivers swap places multiple times with Michelotto coming out on top and taking the chequered flag just ahead of Nemoto and Cabezas with Moulin sealing victory in Pro-Am.



#66 – Basz, Hites, Michelotto (photo by Fotospeedy)

The next round of the Italian GT Endurance Championship will take place at Mugello in July.

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