



Thrilling Barcelona victory takes title chase to the wire

22nd September, 2019 – International GT Open, Barcelona

An outstanding performance from Frederik Schandorff and Tuomas Tujula in the rain at Barcelona on Saturday saw them take their third Pro-Am victory of the season. A brilliant recovery drive from Tujula followed by a brave tyre choice from Schandorff leaves them four points off the Championship leaders as we head to the final round in Monza.



Schandorff headed into the penultimate round of the International GT Open Championship lying second in Pro-Am, trailing the Mercedes pair of Onslow-Cole and Pierburg by just nine points. Partnered with Tujula for the last two rounds the pair had scored two class wins in four races and were hungry for further success. After sunny skies for free practice the Catalan circuit was soaked by heavy rain an hour before Saturday's qualifying. Tujula took the VSR Lamborghini out for the session and showed his pace in the treacherous conditions, qualifying seventh overall and second in Pro-Am.

It was still wet for the race and a great start by the Finnish driver saw him pass Gonda's BMW for sixth before being tapped into a spin by Reuda. He managed to quickly extricate his Lamborghini from the gravel but rejoined down in nineteenth place. Jedlinski wasn't so fortunate and the safety car was called out while his Audi was towed out of danger, allowing Tujula to close up to the rest of the field. Racing resumed with one hour left on the clock and Tujula gained three places on the first lap of green running, overtaking Gosselin, Hill and

finally the Pro-Am Mercedes of Ward. A lap later he was right behind Schandorff's Championship rival Pierburg and in no time at all passed the Mercedes before gaining another position by overtaking Lenz. By lap nine he had caught Liang who had been struggling to pass Gonda. Tujula wasted no time despatching the Chinese driver to take third in Pro-Am and scythed past Gonda to move into the overall top ten. Lapping as fast as the leaders Tujula's next victim was Perez-Companc who he passed spectacularly around the outside to take second in Pro-Am just before the pit window opened. With the track starting to dry the team left Tujula out for as long as possible giving them time to debate tyre strategy. Confident of his own ability and sure of his car Schandorff opted bravely for slick tyres. His gamble paid off and he was soon lapping considerably faster than the drivers who had chosen a second set of wets and, despite his fifteen second success handicap discounted in the pit-stop, was quick to consolidate fourth in Pro-Am. His pace picked up as the track came to him and by lap twenty-one he had passed Giammaria for third in class and was gaining on Khodair and Remenyako ahead. A lap later and he was up to second and on lap twenty-six sailed past Remenyako to take the Pro-Am lead. One of the fastest on track in the final ten minutes Schandorff took the chequered flag in fifth place overall having pulled out a convincing twenty-five second lead over the rest of the Pro-Am runners.



The sun returned on Sunday and Schandorff qualified for the race in seventh place, fourth in Pro-Am. A scrappy first lap for the whole field saw him fall to tenth place, fourth in Pro-Am. With the field largely static as the race progressed Schandorff enjoyed a long and enthusiastic dice with Perera and Jedlinski while just up ahead of him was Onslow-Cole. The pit window opened on lap fourteen and Schandorff was the first of the Pro-Am front runners to stop, pitting on lap sixteen to hand over to Tujula. The VSR Lamborghini had accumulated a mammoth twenty-five second success handicap and when Tujula joined the race he was well down the order. He was soon one of the fastest on track, wasting no time passing Razak and Liang as he hunted down the Pro-Am leaders until a spin on lap twenty-seven ended his race in the gravel. A time penalty for the Onslow-Cole and Pierburg Mercedes for a pit-stop infringement meant they finished sixth in class leaving them a slender four point lead over Schandorff as the teams look ahead to the final race in Monza next month.

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