

RACE REPORT: 23rd June 2024

Fanatec GT World Challenge Asia by AWS, Round 3 – Fuji, Japan

VSR 1-2 at Fuji

The Fanatec GT World Challenge Asia Championship reached the halfway point with the first of three double header race weekends in Japan. For the Fuji round VSR entered an unchanged drive line-up. Bian and Liberati drove the 6 Pro-Am Lamborghini, Zhou and Mapelli the 63 Pro-Am Lamborghini and Mizutani and Nemoto the ANR with VSR entered 563 Silver-Am Lamborghini.

All three cars finished the three-hour test in the top ten with Mapelli second fastest. Weather affected Friday's official practice sessions with the morning outing red flagged and not resumed due to the heavy rain drenching the track and the afternoon session run on a wet but drying track.



#6 – Bian / Liberati (photo by Kako Photography)

Bian, Zhou and Mizutani set the qualifying times for race one's grid and, under clear skies, Bian was the fastest of the VSR drivers, fifth fastest in his session. Zhou took a place on row ten and Mizutani was tenth fastest in the Silver-Am category. A chaotic opening lap ended with the two VSR Pro-Am cars running together in sixth and seventh overall before a jump start penalty for Yu's Audi elevated them one spot. The battle for Pro-Am honours quickly became a heated affair with the top three all backed up behind a Silver Cup car. The first move was Bian's and on lap eight the Chinese driver go ahead of Lu in turn one to take the class lead. The pit window opened on lap thirteen and both the VSR cars pitted immediately so Liberati and Mapelli could take over for the run to the flag. The fastest cars on track they quickly

cemented first and second in class and at the end of the race were second and third overall. The ANR with VSR car ran into difficulties after damage and retired close to the end of the race.



#63 – Zhou / Mapelli (photo by Kako Photography)

For Sunday's race, track limits infringements again impacted heavily on the grid. Mapelli and Nemoto shared row four and Liberati started from row six. Heavy rain overnight left the circuit wet and shrouded in mist and first racing lap was chaotic as the drivers got the measure of the tricky conditions. After a lap the Safety Car was on track for a multi-car incident at turn three. Racing resumed three minutes before the pit window and at the restart Nemoto, leading the Silver-Am class was spun around by Winklehock's Audi. Nemoto was the first Lamborghini to stop and he handed the 563 to Mizutani. Liberati and Mapelli stopped on consecutive laps and both had heavy success penalties to discount from Saturday's race. As the pit window ended the rain restarted and the Safety Car was once more out on track. The green flags came out with fifteen minutes left to run. Zhou was running eighth in Pro-Am and Bian tenth. A short Full Course Yellow to collect debris from the chicane once more stopped racing and the final run to the chequered flag was just one lap. The two VSR cars finished once more in formation, this time with the 63 ahead of the 6, finishing sixth and seventh in class, eighth and ninth overall. Mizutani bought the 563 home sixth in class.



#563 – Mizutani / Nemoto (photo by Kako Photography)

The next round of the GT World Challenge Asia Championship will be in a fortnight's time at Suzuka.

END