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Costa & Nemoto unbeatable at Imola

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## Costa & Nemoto unbeatable at Imola

25th September 2016 - Italian Super GT Cup, Imola

The penultimate round of the **Italian Super GT Cup** took place at **Imola** this weekend and VSR fielded three **Lamborghini Huracáns** for the double-header. **Nicolas Costa**, battling for the Championship lead with Desideri, Zaugg and D'Amico, was paired again with **Yuki Nemoto** whilst **Bar Baruch** and **Jia Tong Liang** continued their partnership and **Amir Krenzia** raced alone in the Elephant branded car.



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Costa and Nemoto followed Saturday's double pole with a dominant lights to flag victory in race one and a superb win in race two overcoming a thirty second handicap (photo by Photo 4)

Qualifying took place early on Saturday morning and on track for Q1 were Nemoto, Baruch and Krenzia. Nemoto continued his excellent GT debut by taking pole ahead of Spinelli and Desideri. Just 0.29 seconds further back was Baruch who claimed a spot on row two whilst Krenzia's best time was good enough for row five.

Nemoto made a perfect start when the lights went out, easily keeping Spinelli behind him whilst Baruch slotted into third pushing Desideri down to 4th place. Baruch kept the Italian honest for the whole of his stint while at the front of the field Nemoto pulled away from everyone, intent on doing all he could to even things out as Spinelli in 2nd had no handicap whilst the VSR car would have to stay in the pits for an extra 20 seconds. Krenzia was charging through the field from 9th place and when the pit window opened was running in 6th having passed Pellegrinelli and Comi on lap ten. He was the first of the VSR cars to make their obligatory stop and exited the pits right behind Zaugg. Three laps later Nemoto pitted and handed the leading car over to Costa whilst Baruch did one extra tour before giving the 105 car to Liang. As the race headed into the final fifteen minutes Costa had a 12 second advantage over Zaugg in 4th who was hunting down Necchi and Liang ahead of him. Krenzia was just 3 seconds behind and running in 5th. A backmarker who spent several laps ignoring the blue flags around the circuit allowed the group to close up and when Liang went to pass he chopped across the VSR car which skittered into the gravel. Several laps later Krenzia was pushed out of the tight battle for 2nd and slipped down to 6th place while up ahead Costa was managing the race and pulling out an unassailable advantage over his main Championship rivals. The Brazilian took the flag to win by nearly 19 seconds and to edge ahead in the Championship race.

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Krenzia raced alone at Imola and after qualifying 4th for race two challenged for a podium on Saturday (photo by Photo 4)

In Q2 Costa completed a clean sweep for the 106 VSR Lamborghini, taking an accomplished pole position with a lap-time that was over one second clear of the rest of the field including Zaugg in 2nd place. Krenzia finished the session an impressive 4th fastest and Liang qualified just behind him on row three.

Krenzia was unable to make the start of the race but at the front of the field Costa was untroubled. The Brazilian made a faultless start and began to immediately push to pull out a gap over Zaugg who had a handicap of twenty seconds less than the VSR car. Liang ran in 5th at the start of the race and kept Kasai behind him until lap nine when he ceded his position to the Japanese driver. Three laps later he pitted and handed the car over to his team-mate Baruch. Costa pitted on lap fourteen, having pulled out ten seconds over Zaugg who stayed out for one more lap. Nemoto took over the VSR car and after remaining in the pits for the extra thirty second handicap rejoined the race. When the pit window closed he was in 3rd but quickly passed Negra for 2nd and began hunting down D'Amico who had taken over from Zaugg. Behind them Baruch had moved back up to 5th place and was battling hard with Spinelli as the two caught and passed Negra. Two laps later a trip through the gravel slowed Baruch who took the flag in 5th place. Nemoto meanwhile was flying and was reeling in D'Amico by two seconds a lap. With twelve minutes left he had the Raton car in his sights and a lap later wrested the lead from the

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Italian with a decisive move exiting the parabolica. In the remaining minutes he pulled out a substantial gap and took the win by 14 seconds.



Baruch and Liang suffered a disappointing DNF in race one after looking set for a podium and finished 5th in race two (photo by Photo 4)

The second victory of the weekend for Costa and Nemoto completed a perfect event for the pair who scored two poles, two wins and two fastest laps. Thanks to their three consecutive victories Costa now leads the Drivers Championship as the series heads to Mugello for the final round on 15-16 October.

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