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Victorious end to the 2024 Italian GT season for VSR

Italian GT Sprint Championship, Round 4 – Imola

VSR finished their 2023 Italian GT campaign with victories in both races to claim the Team title, the GT Cup Pro-Am title and finish second in the overall driver's Championship by the narrowest of margins. At the final round in Imola, the team's home track, VSR had five of their Lamborghini Huracans on track - three GT3s, all in the Pro class, and two Super Trofeos. Unchanged driver line-ups for all the cars saw Llarena and Moulin in the number 19, Cazzaniga and Petrov in the 60, Liberati and Michelotto sharing the 63, Stadsbader and Randazzo in the 163 Pro-Am Super Trofeo and Zanon in the 206 Am Super Trofeo entry.



#19 – Mateo Llarena / Baptiste Moulin (photo by Fotospeedy)

A field of thirty-six meant traffic was a problem in free-practice and qualifying. Out on track in Q1 were Moulin, Petrov, Liberati, Stadsbader and Zanon. Liberati set the pole despite sitting out most of the session, beating the Championship leading BMW driven by Klingmann by just 0.06 of a second. Moulin set a season best third quickest time to start from row two and Petrov was sixth quickest after suffering damage when hit by a GT Cup car. Stadsbader was quickest in the GT Cup and Zanon was the second fastest GT Cup Am entry.



#60 – Riccardo Cazzaniga / Artem Petrov (photo by Fotospeedy)

Liberati got the jump on Klingmann at the start of the race and headed the BMW for his entire stint. Behind him Petrov passed both Ferraris to run fourth behind Moulin. Stadsbader kept comfortably at the head of the GT Cup field and Zanon held third in Am whilst battling fiercely with Scarpetta and Pastorelli. By the time the pit window opened Liberati had eeked out a small margin to Klingmann but as the pair hit slower traffic this was quickly eroded. Petrov was the first VSR Lambo to pit, handing over to Cazzaniga and was followed in by Zanon who had a seventeen second success penalty to discount. A lap later Moulin pitted and Llarena took over the 19 car. On lap seventeen Liberati dived for the pits and was followed in by Klingmann. The VSR car had a fifteen second success penalty compared to the BMW's twelve seconds and it was the BMW who rejoined first, now with Spengler at the wheel. Stadsbader pitted for Randazzo just before the window closed and maintained track advantage over the GT Cup field. Llarena was at the head of the overall race as Michelotto in the 63 pushed to catch Spengler. By lap twenty-four the title protagonists were together and Michelotto attempted a pass only for Spengler to force him off on to the grass. Two laps later another attempt resulted in Michelotto tapping the BMW into a spin. With the BMW beached in the gravel the Safety Car was called out and the VSR driver was given a penalty which would leave him out of the points when the chequered flag fell. Llarena took the win for the 19 car with Cazzaniga third. Randazzo held on to the lead of the GT Cup race and Zanon survived some hairy moments to finish fourth in Am. The title would therefore go down to the final race on Sunday with the BMW leading Liberati and Michelotto by five points.



#63 – Edoardo Liberati / Mattia Michelotto (photo by Fotospeedy)

In qualifying for the final race of the season Cazzaniga was the only VSR GT3 driver to have a trouble-free session. The Italian placed the 60 car on the front row but a crash for Llarena meant he started from row seven just ahead of Michelotto who was on his hot lap when the red flag came out. With just three minutes left of the session his final chance to set a time was wrecked by Spengler who blocked him by slowing on the racing line. Randazzo was third quickest in the GT Cup and Zanon once again second fastest in GT Cup Am.



#163 – Piero Randazzo / Gilles Stadsbader (photo by Fotospeedy)

The final race got underway cleanly with Cazzaniga holding second and Michelotto rocketing through the field to eighth place before the Safety Car was called out before the first lap had been completed. Racing went green again on lap three and there was just enough time for Michelotto to pass Ponzio for seventh before the Safety Car was once more out on track. At the restart the Italian took advantage of Kelstrup and Castro tangling to move into fifth and two laps later had caught up to the battle for second between Cazzaniga, Spengler and Denes. On lap nine he overtook Denes for fourth. On lap ten the pit window opened and Randazzo bought the 163 in from fourth in GT Cup Pro-Am and Stadsbader took over after discounting a fifteen second success penalty from Saturday's win. Two laps later Larena pitted for Moulin and they too discounted their fifteen second success penalty. Out on track Michelotto had achieved what had looked impossible at the start and had overtaken Spengler who immediately pitted. Two laps later Cazzaniga boxed from second and Petrov took over the 60 car after discounting a nine second penalty. Zanon pitted from fourth in class and discounted an eleven second penalty. Last to box was Michelotto who handed the 63 car to Liberati for the final stint of the race just as the pit window closed. Liberati and Klingmann quickly dispatched the Pro-Am cars and ran one-two with Liberati pulling out a five second gap until the Safety Car was called out with six minutes to go. Racing was never resumed and victory for Liberati and Michelotto left them tied on points with the BMW. With equal numbers of victories and podium finishes the title was eventually awarded to the BMW drivers who had one fourth place finish to their name compared to a fifth place scored by Liberati and Michelotto. Petrov bought the 60 car home to secure third in the

Championship for himself and Cazzaniga and Moulin took the last point despite a penalty for a Safety Car infringement from Llarena. Stadsbader took the chequered flag in fourth which was enough to easily claim the GT Cup title and Zanon's sixth in Am sealed third in the Championship.



#206 – Ignazio Zanon (photo by Fotospeedy)

VSR's season concludes with the Lamborghini Super Trofeo European and World Finals at Vallelunga next month.

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