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Hard-fought second place for Kroes, Schandorff and Tujula in Imola Endurance

The second round of the Italian GT Endurance Championship was held at Imola this weekend and VSR entered an unchanged driver line-up with Steven Aghakhani, Raffaele Giammaria and Leonardo Pulcini in the number 19 Lamborghini and Danny Kroes, Frederik Schandorff and Tuomas Tujula sharing the number 63.



A tough qualifying session saw the cars line up on the grid in eighth (car 63) and tenth (car 19). Kroes and Aghakhani took the start of the three-hour race and Kroes was quick to make a statement, passing Bohn and Postiglione as the field streamed into Tamburello. By lap three he was menacing Di Amato's Ferrari and quickly muscled his way past to move into fifth before Galbiati flew off the road and the safety car neutralised the race. Racing resumed on lap seven and at the restart Aghakhani became involved in a heated battle for eighth with Bohn and Cressoni. On lap twelve Kroes found a way past Comandini's BMW for third place and Aghakhani stole eighth from Bohn as the VSR cars enlivened the race. But as the first pit window approached Kroes hit trouble when his bonnet popped up forcing him to pit for repairs. He lost nearly a minute and rejoined at the back of the GT3 pack. Aghakhani continued to dice with Cressoni, getting the better of the Italian on lap thirty, just as the pit window opened. The American youngster pitted and handed over to Pulcini and three laps later Kroes stopped the 63 car and Tujula got behind the wheel.



Both Pulcini and Tujula showed great pace in their stints and were frequently the fastest cars on track in the middle part of the race. On lap thirty-six Pulcini passed Zug for fourth and set off after the Ferrari trio ahead of him as Tujula clawed his way back through the field. A mistake from Linossi handed him eighth on lap forty-two and ten laps later he had caught the battle between Mancinelli and Renauer. Tujula flew past the Audi on the same lap as Pulcini moved the 19 car into third place, passing Vezzoni around the outside. By lap fifty-eight Tujula was back up to sixth and battling once more with the front-running BMW.

The second pit window opened on lap sixty-four. Tujula pitted immediately and Schandorff took over the 63 car. A sensor issue on the 19 car caused Pulcini to come in a lap later. The issue was solved by a reset but valuable seconds were lost on his in-lap. Giammaria took over for the final stint and when the pit window closed had fallen down to sixth whilst Schandorff was back in third. With forty minutes left to run Giammaria was sandwiched between Bohn and Spengler, battling over fourth, and Di Amato who was charging back through the field whilst Schandorff was making significant in-roads into Hudspeth's ten second advantage. Lap seventy-nine saw Giammaria pass Bohn and in the final twenty minutes his nail-biting dice with Di Amato provided much of the race's excitement. In the closing minutes of the race Schandorff caught Hudspeth and passed him in masterful fashion before edging away to consolidate a fine second place finish. Giammaria took the flag in sixth place.



The VSR cars now lie fourth and seventh in the Championship with two races left to run. The next race will be held at Vallelunga next month.

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