



Media Information

Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe: Third win gives Gilardoni the lead at Spa

Sant'Agata Bolognese/Spa-Francorchamps, 23 October 2020 - Oregon Team's Kevin Gilardoni recorded his third straight Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe victory to move into the lead of the points standings after an action-packed opening race at Spa-Francorchamps. The Belgian circuit offered up thrills and spills throughout the 50-minute encounter, with the pole-sitting #7 GSM Racing Lamborghini Huracán of Jonathan Cecotto - shared with Patrick Liddy - led the first stint with relative ease.

Behind, a stunning three-car battle ensued for second place between Dean Stoneman (#33 Bonaldi Motorsport), Sebastian Balthasar (#2 Leipert Motorsport) and the impressive Max Weering (#61 Johan Kraan Motorsport). Weering would eventually fall out of contention in the second stint, as heavy rain hit the Spa-Francorchamps track in typically downpour fashion, crashing out while trying to pass the vastly more experienced Miloš Pavlović (#41 Target Racing).

At the start, Cecotto made the most of a clear windscreen in front of him to build a largely comfortable three-second lead over the chasing pack, while Stoneman had to fend off ferocious attacks from Balthasar and Gilardoni in the opening stages.

Balthasar started fourth on the grid but found himself in third after the field negotiated La Source for the first time. Once ahead of Weering, the German set about catching and passing Stoneman in front, which proved to be a difficult task.

His first attempt was around the outside of Stoneman at Les Combes, but the Leipert Motorsport driver run wide and was forced to cede the place to Stoneman. He did, however, make the move stick around the outside of La Source to secure second place.

While the track was damp but drying at the start of the race, the heavens suddenly opened around the back of the circuit just as the pit window opened. This left some drivers making their mandatory pit-stop earlier than planned while other stayed out.

Cecotto stayed out and handed over to American team-mate Liddy at the last possible moment. This briefly paid off as the #7 emerged from the stops still in the lead.

Balthasar handed over to his team-mate Noah Watt - son of former Formula 3000 driver Jason - who then began to make ground on the leader. Gilardoni was also on a charge and quickly passed Watt for second after the Dane suffered a snap of oversteer on the exit of Les Combes.

Gilardoni, now with pace in hand, began to reel Liddy in and the pair duked it out spectacularly down the Kemmel Straight for the lead, with the Oregon Team Huracán emerging in the lead.

Liddy then had to defend heavily from Watt and Stoneman in the closing stages, with the latter pair swapping positions inside the remaining 10 minutes. Such was the ferocity of Stoneman and Watt's battle for third, Liddy was given some much need breathing space.

Ultimately, Stoneman's race unravelled following his fight with Watt. Stoneman passed Watt down the inside of Les Combes with two minutes remaining, but the pair made contact on exit, giving Stoneman a puncture. The British driver subsequently spun out after Pouhon, severely denting his championship hopes.



Media Information

The key beneficiary was Gilardoni, who secured the win despite having to spend an extra three-second at his pit-stop, due to not having his regular partner in the #11 Oregon Team car, Dorian Boccolacci who is on Spa 24 Hours duty.

Post-race, the race stewards handed Watt and Balthasar a 10-second penalty for his part in the contact with Stoneman at Les Combes, but such was the margin at the finish, the Leipert Motorsport duo maintained their third place result.

Kevin Gilardoni (#11 Oregon Team) said: "I'm so happy with this win, it was such a tough race. I had to fight a lot with the car, but we didn't give up. I knew I had a good car for the race in terms of overall pace, so I pushed a lot at the beginning of the race. Then in the middle of the race, it was all about managing the tyres. The car at the end of the race was mega, I wasn't pushing 100% because it was sliding a lot and the rain became a lot heavier. The condition of the track changed about three times, so it was a big challenge."

Karol Basz and Andrzej Lewandowski claimed Pro-Am victory in their #16 VS Racing Lamborghini Huracán ST Evo despite picking up a pit-stop time penalty for going under the minimum time. A superb opening stint from Lewandowski from 11th on the grid ensured the all Polish line-up were mixing it with the top Pro category runners before the pit window opened.

Once in the car, Basz made the most of superior pace and the incidents in front to finish a fantastic fourth overall, and two places ahead of nearest Pro-Am challengers Elias Niskanen and Mikko Eskelinen (#30 Leipert Motorsport).

Fidel Leib and Yury Wagner continued their run of good form in the #21 Leipert Motorsport car by taking another victory in the Am class to close the gap to Massimo Mantovani in the points standings. Their result was made all the more valuable as Mantovani and team-mate Dilantha Malagamuwa could only manage third in class behind the Boutsen Ginion pairing Marc Rostan and Giuseppe Fascicolo.

Newcomer Ray Calvin claimed the Lamborghini Cup honours for Konrad Motorsport, beating Imperiale Racing's Hans Fabri.

The second race of the weekend is scheduled to take place on Saturday at 12:50 CET.

Lamborghini Super Trofeo - 2020 Calendar

Round 1: Misano Adriatico, 7-9th August

Round 2: Nürburgring, 4-5th September

Round 3: Barcelona, 9-11th October

Round 4: Spa-Francorchamps, 20-24th October

Round 5: Circuit Paul Ricard, 13-15th November



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