Lamborghini claims second GT Open victory of the year at Paul Ricard

Chovet and Paul make inroads into points lead with double pole and race two win in France

Sant’Agata Bolognese/Le Castellet, 23 July 2023 – Oregon Team’s Maximilian Paul and Pierre-Louis Chovet delivered Lamborghini its second International GT Open victory of the season with a determined drive from pole at Paul Ricard in France.

After opening their win account last time out in Hungary, Chovet and Paul missed out on a similar result in the opening race on Saturday but made amends to cap off a dominant weekend, which included a pair of pole positions.

The weekend began with free practice on Friday morning, during which the pair of Oregon Team Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2s began steadily with a 13th fastest time for the #63 and 16th best time for the #19. Come the second session, though, the #19 enjoyed better fortunes and set the fourth quickest time while Paul and Chovet were limited to 18th in the sister car.

Qualifying, however, was a different story and the Huracáns showcased their one-lap pace in the first session with Paul setting a best time of 2m01.992. Such was the closeness of the field, that the second-placed McLaren set exactly the same time as the #63. The #19 qualified ninth in the hands of Arrow.

For the second qualifying session, the #63 again proved to be the fastest car over a lap, this time Chovet making sure of top position by going over three tenths quicker than the next best car.

The #63, with Paul at the wheel, made a good getaway to maintain his lead at the start of the opening 70-minute race on Saturday either side of an early safety car following an incident further down the field. The lengthy interruption ate into Paul’s driving stint but, once racing resumed after 10 minutes, the German maintained his lead at the head of the field from the chasing McLaren.

He then handed over to team-mate Chovet, but the #63 had to give up the lead due to a success penalty following their victory in the last round. This left Chovet with some work to do but the Frenchman made progress to recover to second place and fought for the lead before unfortunate contact in the final two minutes caused the #63 to drop to 15th with damage.

Sunday was a new day and Chovet put his demons to rest by leading from pole position at the start of the race in a repeat of the previous day. Chovet came under pressure from the Audi of Haase and defended heavily into the chicane on the Mistral Straight to remain in front. Thankfully for the #63, Chovet and Paul had no success handicap to serve at the mandatory driver-change pit-stop and, despite initially losing out to the #23 Audi at the changeover, Paul closed the gap and moved back into the lead with a perfectly judged overtake at the final corner.
The margin of victory at the end of the race was a mere 0.951s, and Paul/Chovet’s second win of the year consolidates fifth place in the GT Open standings heading into the next round. The latest triumph marked Lamborghini’s 25th in GT Open competition since 2016.