



Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe: Ali/Söderström, Bonduel come out on top in Imola opener

A record entry of 52 cars took to the grid for the first round of the 2024 season on the FIA WEC support bill

Sant'Agata Bolognese/Imola, 21 April 2024 - The 16th season of Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe kicked off in spectacular fashion at Imola, with a record grid of 52 cars joining the support bill of the FIA World Endurance Championship for the first time. Contrasting weather conditions presented a variety of challenges for the one-make series reserved for the Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo EVO2, with Saturday's opener red flagged with 22 minutes remaining following a severe thunderstorm while Sunday's second bout took place under blue skies.

Target Racing's Oliver Söderström and Largim Ali took victory after a brave strategic call to not change to wet tyres in race one, while Boutsen VDS pairing Renaud Kuppens and Roe Meyuhas won in Pro-Am, finishing fourth overall. Maiden class victories went to Art-Line's Nigel Bailly (Am) and Brutal Fish Racing's Charlie Martin and Jason Keats (Lamborghini Cup).

In race two, Amaury Bonduel announced his title ambitions with victory for BDR Competition, with Micánek Motorsport's Štefan Rosina and Bronislav Formánek prevailed in Pro-Am. The Am win went to Pietro Perolini and Davide Roda while Art Line Racing's Shota Abkhazava dominated Lamborghini Cup.

Race 1

Pro

The opening 50-minute race of the new season was dictated by the capricious Emilia Romagna weather as dark clouds loomed over the circuit before the start. An incident before the lights turned to green involving Jachym Galaš (Micánek Motorsport) and Leonardo Caglioni (Oregon Team) pitched the latter in to the pit wall, forcing an aborted start and an additional formation lap. Once racing got underway properly, pole-sitter Bonduel led away from the chasing Mattia Michelotto (VS Racing), establishing a slender one-second lead before the forecasted storm finally arrived.

High winds preceded thunder and lightning and brought leaves, grass and dirt onto the track, making life incredibly difficult for the crews. Eventually, the rain came and, following the deployment of the safety car, Bonduel led Michelotto and the rest of the cars into the pits. Most changed to wet tyres, including second-place finishers Sebastian Balthasar and Jacob Riegel (Leipert Motorsport) but both the Target Racing pairing of Söderström and Ali, and the recovering Oregon entry of Caglioni and Geraci, elected to stay on slick tyres.



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The strategic gamble paid off handsomely as Ali and Söderström claimed their second Super Trofeo Europe victory as the race was stopped with 22 minutes remaining, while Geraci and Caglioni completed their last-to-the-podium drive in third.

Oliver Söderström (#9 Target Racing) said: “It was a crazy race, probably one of the craziest I have ever driven in my life. The conditions were very difficult and even at the start of the race, it was so dark and there was a lot of stuff on the track. I struggled a little bit in the beginning, and it started to rain just before the pit-stops, but it was not enough to change tyres. And then it was up to Largim to keep the car on the track when it started to rain properly.”

Team-mate Largim Ali added: “I had no idea if the safety car was going to come in or stay out, I just had to believe in my engineer’s decision to not change tyres and I prayed a lot during the race that he was right! It was a big gamble, but it paid off and it’s a good way to start the season for us.”

Pro-Am

Amid all of the chaos that affected the entire field, Boutsen VDS’ Roee Meyuhas and Renaud Kuppens came out on top in the Pro-Am category, finishing a staggering fourth overall. Key to the strong result was keeping the car on the track as the heavens opened following the pit window. Meyuhas and Kuppens ended up some 40-seconds clear of Micánek Motorsport’s Štefan Rosina and Bronislav Formánek, with the Lamborghini Stuttgart by Target Racing duo of Calle Bergman and Guido Luchetti taking the final step on the podium.

Am

Art-Line's Nigel Bailly was another beneficiary of the weather as the Belgian driver took his maiden Lamborghini Super Trofeo win, finishing ninth overall at the flag. In his second season of one-make racing, Bailly worked his way up from eighth on the grid, steering clear of any trouble to prevail at the end of the 50 minutes. Others in the Am class did not enjoy as clean a run, notably Bailly’s compatriot and team-mate Rodrigue Gillion, who lost control of his car on the exit of Aqua Minerali and heavily impacting the barrier, thus extending the safety car period.

By the time the red flags came out, Bailly was the winner ahead of Pietro Perolini and Davide Roda for Oregon Team and pole-sitters Anthony McIntosh and Glenn McGee (Leipert Motorsport).

LB Cup

The surprise of the race came undoubtedly in the Lamborghini Cup class, as Brutal Fish Racing’s Jason Keats and Charlie Martin prevailed to take their first series race win with eighth overall. Martin started the race in the #54 machine before handing over to Keats as the rain started to fall. With visibility and car control severely reduced, conditions were precarious at best, but the Canadian managed to head GT3 Poland’s Holger Harmsen and the defending class champions Donovan and Luciano Privitelio (Rexal Villorba Corse) at the flag.



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Race 2

Pro

Bonduel had dominated qualifying on Saturday morning and took pole for the second race by just under four-tenths of a second, and duly led off a much smoother rolling start than the previous day. Close behind, the action was frantic as Ali squeezed past Andrea Frassinetti (#16 VS Racing) at Tamburello to take second place. Further back, Egor Orudzhev (#57 Art Line Racing) made contact with the other VS Racing machine of Gilles Stadsbader, forcing both into the pits at the end of the first lap. Stadsbader, along with team-mate Mattia Michelotto recovered to 18th at the finish. The first of three safety cars was then deployed following an incident for the #25 Uniq Racing entry of Jerzy Spinkiewicz who spun at the exit of Tosa and hit the wall. Not long after the restart, the safety car was out again after a multi-car incident at the same corner: the DL Racing car of Filippo Lazzaroni and Guido Luchetti's Target Racing Pro-Am entry made contact, with the latter then being hit side-on by the #48 DL Racing car of Christian Bortolato. But the constant in the Pro class was Bonduel who maintained his lead over Söderström after the pit-stops and took the win by just over five seconds. The Iron Lynx rookie pairing of Pavel Lefterov and Stefan Bostandjiev produced a strong race and completed the podium. The pick of the battles further down the field came in the closing stages as Leipert Motorsport's Sebastian Balthasar prevailed in a three-wide run towards Tamburello, beating Hampus Ericsson (Target Racing) to sixth place; the latter survived a high-speed half-spin after putting two wheels onto the grass on the approach to Tamburello.

Amaury Bonduel, race two winner (#28 BDR Competition), said: "I'm very happy with the victory because it was not an easy race for me with all of the safety cars. I had to keep the concentration a lot, but the pit-stops went well, considering I had to spend longer stationary than the Target car. But overall, we can be happy with the weekend, and I am looking forward to my home race at Spa-Francorchamps next month."

Pro-Am

Micánek Motorsport's Štefan Rosina and Bronislav Formánek claimed the win in a competitive Pro-Am race, edging out Iron Lynx's Joran Leneutre and Claude-Yves Gosselin by just 1.6s. Teenager Leneutre got the jump on pole-sitter Luchetti at the start and held onto the lead after Luchetti's race was effectively ended in the Tosa incident. Renaud Kuppens was up to second place but a mistake at the Variante Alta left him beached in the gravel trap. He and team-mate Meyuhas continued to finish fourth. Completing the podium was the ASR crew of Miloš Pavlović and Alessio Ruffini.

Am

The Oregon Team entry of Pietro Perolini and Davide Roda claimed their first Super Trofeo victory together following a pair of post-race time penalties: one for the on-the-road winners, Adrian and



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Andrzej Lewandowski and another 10-second penalty for the second-place finishers, VS Racing's Stéphane Tribaudini and Piergiacomo Randazzo.

Perolini and Roda led the early stages from pole position but dropped back after the stops with Roda at the wheel. This elevated Lewandowski to the lead with six minutes remaining, with the VS Racing crew of Tribaudini and Randazzo up to second. The order remained unchanged following the third safety car period caused by Stéphan Guérin spinning his Schumacher CLRT Huracán into the gravel on the exit of the Villeneuve chicane but was finalised in the steward's room.

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Am

Father and son combination Adrian and Andrzej Lewandowski claimed their first race victory in Super Trofeo competition as a partnership, catapulting to the lead late on in the race in their #3 ASR machine. The Oregon Team entry of Pietro Perolini and Davide Roda led the early stages from pole position but dropped back after the stops with Roda at the wheel. This elevated Lewandowski to the lead with six minutes remaining, with the VS Racing crew of Stéphane Tribaudini and Piergiacomo Randazzo up to second. The order remained unchanged following the third safety car period caused by Stéphan Guérin spinning his Schumacher CLRT Huracán into the gravel on the exit of the Villeneuve chicane.

LB Cup

In contrast to race one, the second Lamborghini Cup encounter was a more straightforward affair with Shota Abkhazava (Art Line Racing) leading from start to finish to clinch his first victory of the season. The Super Trofeo veteran kept his nose clean at the beginning of the race and stayed out of trouble either side of the pit window. He headed home GT3 Poland’s Holger Harmsen, who takes the early championship lead in the category, with Paolo Biglier and Petar Matić taking the final step on the podium for ASR.

The next round of the Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe season will take place at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium on the weekend of the 9-11 May, once again supporting the FIA World Endurance Championship.

2024 Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe calendar

19-21 April - Imola * FIA WEC

9-11 May - Spa-Francorchamps * FIA WEC

11-15 June - Le Mans * FIA WEC

26-28 July - Nürburgring * GT World Challenge Europe

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11-13 October - Barcelona * GT World Challenge Europe

14-15 November - Jerez de la Frontera * Lamborghini World Finals

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