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Lamborghini SC63 claims historic top 10 finish on Le Mans 24 Hours debut

Both Hypercars arrive at the finish of the French classic with strong reliability and race pace

Sant'Agata Bolognese/Le Mans, 16 June 2024 - Lamborghini Iron Lynx recorded a breakthrough top 10 finish on its first appearance in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, with the #63 crew of Mirko Bortolotti, Daniil Kvyat and Edoardo Mortara delivering a superb performance in the jewel-in-the-crown endurance classic to deliver the first drivers' points in the FIA World Endurance Championship.

The sister #19 combination of Matteo Cairoli, Andrea Caldarelli and Romain Grosjean finished 13th on its FIA WEC debut, ensuring that both of the Lamborghini SC63s saw the chequered flag at the end of the 24 Hours.

Key to the dual finish for Lamborghini Iron Lynx was once again its strong reliability, with neither car requiring going back into the garage for the duration of the race. The result held even more significance for Lamborghini Squadra Corse as it marked the first time the brand has finished the 24 Hours in seven attempts.

In LMGT3, the #85 Iron Dames crew of Sarah Bovy, Rahel Frey and Michelle Gatting overcame a pre-weekend weight increase of 25kg to demonstrate podium-contending speed all race but eventually had to settle for a second top five finish in a row. In the #60 Iron Lynx car, Matteo Cressoni, Franck Perera and Claudio Schiavoni made the finish in 16th after a challenging race.

Free Practice and Qualifying - Hypercar #63 (Bortolotti, Kvyat, Mortara)

Following a generally positive test day on Sunday, the #63 began the week having been forced into a chassis change prior to timed action kicking off on Wednesday afternoon after an issue was identified. Despite this initial setback and a few early challenges with the car, the crew of Bortolotti, Mortara and Kvyat focused on long high fuel runs early in first practice before switching to a qualifying simulation ahead of the grid-setting session in the evening. GT3 traffic spoiled one of Bortolotti's flying laps and a late spin at turn one meant the #63 - vastly improved from FP1 - ended up 14th quickest in the session with a time of 3m25.973, promoted to 13th after the #7 Toyota had its times deleted for causing a session-ending red flag. After qualifying, attention moved to race setup with two night-sessions (two hours on Wednesday in FP2 and a one-hour session for FP4 on Thursday).

#19 (Cairoli, Caldarelli, Grosjean)



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Having not run at a race weekend since the Sebring 12 Hours back in March, this was the first competitive running for the #19, in a new chassis that was shaken down over 100km at Magny-Cours prior to the trip to Le Mans. Early teething issues aside - the crew of Grosjean, Caldarelli and Cairoli struggled with a vibration in the front-end during FP1 and FP2 - performance gains were seen across the quartet of practice sessions, with an 11th-place result in FP3 a highlight. In qualifying, Caldarelli performed well to record a time of 3m27.655, a creditable 3.190s off the ultimate quickest time over the 13.262km track.

Race - Hypercar

#63 (Bortolotti, Kvyat, Mortara)

With changeable conditions on the weather forecast, tyre strategy calls were high on the agenda in the early stages of the race, with Mortara taking the start at the wheel of the #63 for a triple stint before handing over to Bortolotti. At the start of the second hour, the predicted rain arrived over the circuit following which several crews in front gambled on changing to wet tyres. The #63, confident the rain showers would pass, remained on slicks which proved to be the correct decision as Bortolotti ran as high as fifth place behind the sister #19 SC63. Tyre warming continued to provide a challenge, as Kvyat spun at the Dunlop Chicane on his out-lap but managed to right the car and consolidate a place inside the top 15. As night fell, so did a fresh dose of rain and the conditions became so difficult that the safety car was deployed for four hours. Once racing resumed around seven o'clock on Sunday morning, the #63 remained in a lively strategic scrap with the pair of Peugeots on the cusp of the points-finishing positions and showed consistent race pace to take the fight to the more experienced brands entering the final stages. Having switched to wets as the rain arrived once more and subsequently intensified, the #63 moved back into 10th place inside the final hour, successfully holding onto it to claim Lamborghini's first-ever drivers' world championship point of the season.

#19 (Cairoli, Caldarelli, Grosjean)

With Caldarelli starting, the #19 stayed out of trouble on the opening lap and kept its nose clean either side of the rain shower, managing the increasingly difficult conditions with aplomb. Like the #63, tyre management on new tyres after the pit-stops proved a particular challenge, with Cairoli spinning the car into the gravel at Tertre Rouge, narrowly avoiding the barrier before continuing. Grosjean took over from Caldarelli as the trio of drivers completed triple stints each, with the overall race pace of the car remaining competitive against those around it. While no major issues were encountered, a problem with the car's lights meant that the team was forced into front nose and rear bodywork replacements at some pit-stops, with a further broken rear wing and two drivethrough penalties hampering the #19's chances of points. Despite this, Caldarelli brought the car home just 21-seconds behind the second Peugeot, proving the performance of the car.



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Attention for the #19 crew now shifts to next weekend for the third round of the IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship which will take place at Watkins Glen.

Free Practice and Qualifying - LMGT3

Off the back of a thoroughly encouraging previous round at Spa-Francorchamps, both the #85 Iron Dames and #60 Iron Lynx entries had high hopes for the trip to Le Mans. A revised Balance of Performance, however, meant that the week began in challenging fashion with the pair of Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2s receiving an additional 25kg of weight as well as reduced base power. As a result, practice was about working around this and fine-tuning setups to optimise the cars for the race. Having overcome some issues, the #85 crew of Bovy, Frey and Gating was able to showcase their speed but were ultimately left to wonder what could have been as Gating narrowly missed out on Hyperpole session. Meanwhile, the #60 of Perera, Cressoni and Schiavoni enjoyed better fortunes with Perera setting the fourth-best time. For the race, the #60 lined up eighth, one place ahead of the #85.

Race - LMGT3

Despite the qualifying setback, the #85 Iron Dames catapulted itself into the mix early on by following its Hypercar colleagues across the garage in staying on dry weather tyres when the rain came. That allowed Frey, who started, to sit in third place in the second hour as the Swiss racer completed a quadruple stint. Bovy took over and kept the Dames near the front but lost over a minute after being hit by the #4 Porsche Hypercar at the entry to the Porsche Curves, which put the #85 into a series of spins. Bovy pitted soon after and, with no damage reported, finally negated the time loss during the long safety car period. Come the morning, Gating hauled the #85 back into the podium positions by brilliantly hunting down and passing the #31 BMW despite the BOP disparity between the two cars. Strategy played a role in the final stages with the team making the early call to change to wet tyres and maximised their 24 Hours by taking more valuable championship points with fifth at the flag.

Unfortunately for the #60 Iron Lynx crew, the 24 Hours was a disappointing experience following a crash for Schiavoni at the exit of the second Hunaudières chicane, causing some damage to the Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2. A further alternator issues forced the car back into the garage, but the team rallied and made the finish in 16th place.

Quotes

Car #63

Mirko Bortolotti: "I am extremely proud of everybody who is part of this project, Iron Lynx, Lamborghini, all the mechanics, team-mates and engineers, they worked their asses off all week



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and to finish with both cars at Le Mans on our debut here and having one car finish inside the top 10, it's an amazing achievement. This project started less than a year ago, so an amazing day and really happy with how we executed the race. For sure, we still have a lot of work to do, we know that, but we are going to enjoy this result and focus on the next steps."

Daniil Kvyat: "It is really an amazing result for us, we have to enjoy this result, which is a great reward for all the hard work that the team has put in since the start of the season. The next steps we have to take are crucial, but if we have managed to do this result with the car we have got, which is brand new with no upgrades, it shows how strong we are and that in the future we can hopefully fight for victories."

Edoardo Mortara: "It was a very important result for us today, firstly to finish the race was a special achievement for us, especially when we are up against the type of competition we have in the FIA WEC, but to get in the top 10 that was the secondary aim. It's been a long time here in Le Mans and a long week of preparation by everyone from the drivers, mechanics and engineers. To reward them like we have is very important and motivating."

Car #19

Matteo Cairoli: "It's difficult to put this result into words, the aim for us since the start of the week was to get to the finish, with both cars. We had a very good pace, and I am already looking forward to next year; we have around four-and-a-half minutes more or less to recover in 365 days, which is not that much when you think about it. The result is what it is, that doesn't matter but to see the flag after 11 months of hard work is amazing and we have to be proud. What we have done today is magic."

Andrea Caldarelli: "We achieved the target we had in mind for this first time at Le Mans, which was to reach the finish. We did everything we could to get to the end; we had a lot of things happen to us during the race, a lot of things that were trying to stop us, but I am really happy for all of the guys in Sant'Agata and Iron Lynx who worked so hard for this race. There is just a little bit of bittersweet feelings because I really thought we had a good shot [at points] because the race pace was very promising, but the overall feeling is pride."

Romain Grosjean: "I never finished the first Le Mans I did so I am really proud that we managed to get to the end this year. Honestly, driving the Lamborghini was a dream, in the day and in the night, it was so much fun. Thanks go to everyone in the team for the opportunity; I always wanted to do it and now I have done it. There are, of course, bits and pieces that we can improve in order to get into the top 10, even if it wasn't our open objective - and it's great that the other did it - but I think we also had top 10 pace this weekend."



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