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Difficult weekend for Lamborghini SC63 as FIA WEC enters second half of season

#63 crew ran battled for top 10 finish in the 6 Hours of São Paulo before puncture as Iron Dames denied podium shot in LMGT3

Sant'Agata Bolognese/Interlagos, 14 July 2024 - Lamborghini Iron Lynx was left to rue bad luck on the FIA World Endurance Championship's first trip to Interlagos in Brazil since 2014, as a late puncture meant the #63 crew of Mirko Bortolotti, Daniil Kvyat and Edoardo Mortara could only manage 17th at the end of the 6 Hours of São Paulo.

Coming into the fifth round of the season off the back of a morale-boosting first top 10 finish with the Lamborghini SC63 LMDh prototype at Le Mans, improved performance was the main target for the team as the second half of the year began in South America.

High degradation meant that tyre strategy varied between the teams, with the #63 making the most of the softer medium compound to run inside the top 10 positions approaching half-distance. Unfortunately, the pace of those around proved superior and a late puncture extinguished any hopes of a second consecutive points finish.

Meanwhile, in the LMGT3 class, it was another bittersweet weekend for the #85 Iron Dames crew of Sarah Bovy, Rahel Frey and Michelle Gatting who were denied a likely podium finish after taking their second pole position of the year. A burst water pipe at the fourth pit-stop while running second contributed to an eventual retirement, while the sister #60 Iron Lynx Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2 of Matteo Cressoni, Franck Perera and Claudio Schiavoni finished 14th after receiving a drivethrough penalty.

Free Practice and Qualifying - Hypercar

Having never previously visited the Interlagos circuit, the weekend was a discovery for the Lamborghini Iron Lynx team. Focus, therefore, centred on gaining an understanding of how the SC63 and the Michelin tyres performed on the tight and technical track which produced higher than normal degradation. The weekend began with the first of three free practice sessions but running in FP1 was curtailed after an incident for an LMGT3 car which caused barrier damage. The #63 ended up 16th and an unrepresentative five seconds off the pace. FP2 was subsequently extended due to the red flagged opening session, and the #63 was again 16th fastest, albeit reducing the deficit to the best time to just over a second. Improvements were made ahead of FP3 on Saturday which allowed the car to place sixth quickest, with Kvyat qualifying the #63 18th on the grid for the race.

Race - Hypercar



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Tyre strategy proved an intriguing variable at the start of the six hours, with the #63 starting on the harder, more durable compound. Kvyat took the start but struggled to find the ultimate performance on the hards, dropping to the back of the field before moving up to the cusp of the top 10 towards the end of the second hour. Mortara took over with four hours to go, having switched onto the faster medium compound tyre which appeared to unlock more stability and improved race pace from the SC63. During Mortara's double stint, the #63 found itself battling well inside the top 10, rising as high as fifth at one point - due in part to a litany of penalties for several cars in front - and matching the pace of the #35 Alpine, #38 JOTA Porsche and the #93 Peugeot. By the time Bortolotti took over for the final two hours, the #63 began to struggle with the tyre drop-off and dropped to 12th before it suffered a puncture which forced it to make an additional pit-stop. The team remained committed to finishing and Bortolotti brought the car home at the finish in 17th place, benefitting from a crash for the #12 Porsche in the final hour.

Free Practice and Qualifying - LMGT3

Despite receiving a significant weight increase in the pre-event Balance of Performance adjustment, the pair of Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2s started the weekend in promising fashion, with the #60 setting the fourth best time in FP1, one place ahead of the #85. The #60 was then second quickest in FP2 and the #85 third in FP3, but it was in qualifying where the Iron Dames really showed their class, as Bovy stormed to her second pole position of the year with a time of 1m34.413 in the top 10 Hyperpole shootout, some four-tenths quicker than the second placed car. Schiavoni qualified the #60 car 16th.

Race - LMGT3

From pole position, Bovy took the start in the #85 Iron Dames Huracán and kept the magenta car at the head of the field, building a healthy margin of nearly eight seconds from the chasing #92 Porsche. Bovy stayed at the wheel of the #85 for a double stint but, like the SC63 crew, also began to struggle with the tyre degradation and came under pressure from the #92, eventually dropping to second place. Frey took over and kept the car firmly in the hunt for a podium and successfully fended off the assault of the #27 Aston Martin, showing impressive pace before completing her time at the wheel with just over two hours remaining. Gattling was supposed to take over for the final two stints but a burst water pipe during the pit-stop. The car dropped five laps before briefly returning to the track but it was retired soon after. The #60 endured a tricky start to the race as Schiavoni dropped a lap inside the opening hour, before Cressoni received a drivethrough penalty for contact with the #55 Ferrari. It did, however, reach the finish in 14th.

Quotes



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Mirko Bortolotti: "I think it was quite a disappointing weekend to be honest, I'm not really happy with how things went, and the pace wasn't there as we saw in qualifying. This is the shortest track on the calendar so it is clear that the gaps are closer but clearly, we are not competitive. Of course, in the race, we played a little bit of a different strategy game which was great for us in the beginning but not great at the end and then the puncture didn't help. But I think it would have been tough to finish in the points anyway."

Daniil Kvyat: "It was a positive weekend in parts for us, generally speaking. We put ourselves in a strong position early on and we were really in the fight for a top 10 until we got the puncture which unfortunately put us out of contention in the end. We are still working as a team together to find the performance and I think we have the potential to fight for points soon."

Edoardo Mortara: "A difficult weekend for us this weekend, the atmosphere was amazing, and the track was actually quite nice, but it was definitely very challenging in the race because we had to manage the tyre degradation a lot, I think this was the main challenge for this race. We started at the back, but we managed to come through the field quite nicely beginning with Daniil. For me, it was much more difficult because I had to double stint the softer tyres and this proved to be quite difficult especially in the second stint. Nevertheless, we were looking quite promising because we were fighting around P10 with maybe some chances to score some points, but we suffered a puncture and unfortunately this proved to be the end of our comeback. Hopefully the next time it will be better, and we can try to improve the car for COTA."

Photos and videos: media.lamborghini.com

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