



Media Information

Late heart-break costs Lamborghini Squadra Corse GTD victory chance in Daytona 24 Hours

Pfaff Motorsports and Forte Racing also miss out on strong results after accident damage

Powertrain failure cuts short first SC63 outing as a factory team effort

Sant'Agata Bolognese/Daytona, 26 January 2025 - Lamborghini Squadra Corse was denied a shot at GTD victory in the Daytona 24 Hours, the opening round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship following a heart-breaking suspension failure in the final hour.

The #45 Wayne Taylor Racing crew of Danny Formal, Kyle Marcelli, Trent Hindman and Graham Doyle had overcome two drivethrough penalties prior to its retirement and was firmly in the mix thanks to strong pit strategy.

Across the GTD and GTD Pro categories, it was a bittersweet race as the #78 Forte Racing combination of Misha Goikhberg, Franck Perera, Mario Farnbacher and Parker Kligerman were forced out after contact with another car, while the #9 Pfaff Motorsports partnership of Marco Mapelli, Andrea Caldarelli, Jordan Pepper and James Hinchcliffe also had to retire with damage following a multi-car incident.

After just over an hour into the race, the Lamborghini SC63's first outing as part of an official factory entry came to a premature end following a powertrain failure.

Free Practice and Qualifying - GTD and GTD Pro

Following a promising Roar, all three Lamborghini Huracán GT3 EVO2s began the 24 Hours weekend in a similar fashion during free practice. The #9 went quickest in GTD Pro, while the #78 topped GTD with its time of 1m47.321s the quickest of all GT cars combined. The #45 was second in GTD, just 0.382s off the ultimate best. Attention then switched to race preparations with all teams carrying out driver change and operational practice and tyre scrubbing during the second and third practice sessions.

Qualifying on Thursday afternoon was split by classes, with Hindman producing the best performance among the trio of Huracáns with third in an ultra-close GTD session. The #45 ended up just 0.024s off the pole position time, while Perera qualified the #78 fifth, just over a tenth off the ultimate best. In GTD Pro, Caldarelli was at the wheel of the #9 and set the fifth quickest time.

Race - GTD and GTD Pro

All three Huracáns got off to flying starts, with the #9 vaulting two positions to third on the opening before cycling to the lead of the GTD Pro field inside nine minutes. It held onto the advantage for the duration of the first stint but dropped to the back after a wheel issue at the first



Media Information

pit-stop. The recovery, aided by well-timed full course caution periods, allowed the car to climb back up the standings and was on the cusp of the podium places as night fell. Unfortunately, Pepper was unable to avoid getting caught up in a multi-car incident at turn two, the front-right corner damage ultimately proving too severe to continue.

In GTD, both the #78 and #45 Huracáns also enjoyed superb starts to the 24 Hours. Perera took the #78 up three positions to run second early on, while Hindman maintained his third place in the #45. The latter crew had to overcome two pit-stop infringement drivethrough penalties but got back onto the lead lap thanks to a pair of well-timed full course yellow periods. The Wayne Taylor Racing team carried out their routine brake change in the early hours but lost a lap again during a prolonged period of green flag running. A late yellow allowed the #45 to finally get its lap back once more and return to the same pit-stop sequence as its rivals and, with Formal at the wheel, challenged for the victory with 90 minutes to go. However, a cruel suspension failure just seconds before the final stop extinguished any hopes of a memorable fourth GTD victory for Lamborghini with just 57 minutes left.

Much like the #9 GTD Pro car, the #78 Forte Racing Huracán was also forced to retire with accident damage, having shown strong pace all race. Having swapped with Perera, Goikhberg led comfortably during his opening pair of stints, opening up a margin of over 18-seconds at one point before handing over to Kligerman who showed impressive pace on his first outing in a Lamborghini. Unfortunately for the #78, while it remained in contention for a top five finish come the morning, it was forced to retire after being hit by another car with just over six hours left.

Free Practice and Qualifying - GTP

The weekend got off to a tricky start in the first of three free practice sessions on Thursday morning, with the handling of the car differing to that experienced during the pre-event Roar test a week prior. Outright pace also proved challenging versus the competition but, despite losing his best time after a near-miss with the #60 Acura, Bortolotti set the ninth-quickest time in qualifying. Like many other GTP entries, the team elected not to take part in the night session on Thursday evening, given the track conditions were not representative of what the race was going to produce.

Race - GTP

Courtesy of having qualified the SC63, Bortolotti took the start in the #63 machine and kept it clean on the opening lap, initially challenging those immediately in front. The pace at the front was intense and Bortolotti slipped back to 12th before encountering a powertrain problem. The team took the car behind the wall and back to the garage before being forced to retire. The team carried out an initial root cause analysis

Quotes



Media Information

Maurizio Leschiutta, Lamborghini Head of Motorsport: "Daytona was an important challenge for Lamborghini Squadra Corse, like every year, where we could see the race pace of our Huracan GTDs holding their own against our opponents. Unfortunately, incidents along the way prevented us from capitalising on these performances and we missed out on a strong sporting result in both GTD Pro and GTD. As for the SC63 in GTP, I would like to underline that taking the green flag with our car and with a new structure that needed to be completely run in was a significant result. A mechanical failure after 33 laps prevented us from accumulating race experience from Daytona, where we have never raced, even if we are aware that our performance is not yet at the same level as our competitors."

Photos and videos: media.lamborghini.com

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