



Qualifying Report

2015/4/18 Rd-1 Suzuka Circuit

Weather : sunny Temperature : 21°C 19cars

A newborn SUPER FORMULA, equipped with new SF14 manufactured with the concept of 'quick and light' to go back to the starting point and new NRE engine which is highly eco-friendly, will open the season in SUZUKA Circuit again, after 5 month-off-season.

DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING, having Narain Karthikeyan, who has a lot of experience in F1 and European formula races and drove his first SUPER FORMULA year with TEAM IMPUL (TOYOTA engine user) last year, and also having a new engineer, has prepared surely for 2015 season.

In knock-out QF1, the temperature rose from free practice time and course condition was different. The team checked the set-up and adjusted slightly, then the drivers tried to attack again in 6min remaining. They made a good start with Nojiri in 2nd and Karthikeyan in 4th, and both moved on to QF2.

In following QF2, Nojiri attacked calmly and took provisional 1st place. Right after that, Karthikeyan recorded a faster lap. After all, Karthikeyan took 1st position and Nojiri was 2nd. '1-2 position' elevated expectations for QF3.

Finally QF3 began. Nojiri was the first to course in, and Karthikeyan followed. They shortened laps gradually. However, since one went off the course when all cars were attacking, the session had been interrupted with the red flag. They had to strain every nerve to focus on only one attack in 3min to go after restart.

Although Karthikeyan shortened his fastest time in sector2, he finished in 2nd. Nojiri made a mistake at 'Gyaku Bank Curve' and he finished in 7th.

#40: Tomoyuki Nojiri Position 7th (QF1 2nd, QF2 2nd, QF3 7th) 3rd among Honda users

As I had a good feeling about my driving in the official test, HONDA's race-spec engine had improved much. I am sure the engine team did great job. In QF3, because of my mistake, I didn't bring a good result, however, even if I hadn't, I wouldn't have win the pole position. We are still behind in my driving and setup. I understood a lot of things during QF sessions, so I hope to gain more ability to win the pole position by improving myself and my car.



DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING *Team Release*

#41: Narain Karthikeyan Position 2nd (QF1 4th, QF2 1st, QF3 2nd) 2nd among Honda users
The team prepared the best car and QF went well, but I couldn't reach Yamamoto on top. As I am the only driver who know both TOYOTA and HONDA engine, I think performance of Honda's race-spec engine compares favorably with TOYOTA's. Last year was tough year studying, now, this year, I will enjoy the season and leave good results.

Translated by Mariko Nakayama



DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING

Team Release

Race Report

2015/4/19 Rd-1 Suzuka Circuit

Weather: Cloudy Temperature: 15.4°C 19cars

Audience: 23,000/18th (Sat.) 28,000/19th (Sun.) 51,000/TOTAL

Second year of new born SUPER FORMULA has just begun. It opens at SUZUKA Circuit, challenging and technical, with each team competing against each other for potential of a car, whose set-up is almost completed.

The weather is unstable on Race Sunday. It will require driver's physical strength and concentration, and not only the team's strategy especially for pit-stop, but also good luck and timing will control how the race goes.

From 2nd grid at the front row, Karthikeyan started his car quickly, but couldn't accelerate it fast enough. He dropped 3rd places and finished the opening lap in 5th position. On the other hand, Nojiri made a good start, however, there was not enough space to cut in, so he kept 7th position on the opening lap. 5cars from the top to Karthikeyan formed the leading group with less than 1'43".

In the early stage, Nojiri could not shorten lap time. He drove around blocking the cars behind skillfully, but finally one car managed to pass him and he dropped to 8th position, then the deadlock continued.

Karthikeyan improved his personal best again and again until he made pit-in on lap 30. He overtook a car ahead at second stint and raised his position up to 4th. Nojiri's car ran out of gas just before a pit-in on lap 33, and it caused the loss of time. He returned to the course in 11th position, dropping places significantly.

Driving last 10 laps with all their might, Nojiri had recorded the fastest lap repeatedly, and Karthikeyan kept improving his personal best. Yamamoto and Rossiter had troubles, too, and in the end, Karthikeyan reached the goal line in 3rd place, his first podium. Nojiri finished in 8th with points earned.

#40: Tomoki Nojiri Position 8th (4th among Honda users)

I made a satisfying start. But my car was not in good balance because of the poor surface condition at beginning, and I was overtaken by one car. In the middle stage, the surface condition became so good as I could record the fastest lap, which tells that current set-up tend to be sensitive to the surface. I think this will be the key factor in next round, Okayama, so I will improve my car and myself, consulting my Team.



DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING *Team Release*

#41: Narain Karthikeyan Position 3rd (1st among Honda users)

I am disappointed with the mistake at the start. I had a good feeling about the chassis and I could keep driving at a fast pace. It was a challenge for me to overtake the car #39 at second stint. Helped by the car #16's trouble also, I am honestly happy that I finished in third to make it to my first SUPER FORMULA podium as a result. This is my first race with Team DANDELION, and QF 2nd / Race 3rd means a good start and makes us motivated for the next race.

Translated by Mariko Nakayama