



DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING

Team Release

Qualifying Report

2015/5/23 Rd-2 Okayama International Circuit

Weather : cloudy Temperature : 24°C 19cars

SUPER FORMULA is held for the first time in 7 years at OKAYAMA International Circuit.

A Only 5 drivers out of 19 have experience of racing Japanese top formula here. Also, since the course is relatively short and narrow, if they get caught in traffic or cannot make a time trial at their own timing, it will be hard to survive the qualification.

Nojiri, who finished the 2nd official test at OKAYAMA at the end of March in 2nd position, recorded the top time in free practice. His qualification time will be expected.

In knock-out QF1, both Nojiri and Karthikeyan checked attacking strategy with used tires first, then attacked in last 6min. Although there was some adjustment to be done in balance, Nojiri finished in 4th, and Karthikeyan in 10th position for QF2

Following QF2, having fixed the car balance, they launched time attacks.

Nojiri recorded the top time in Sector1, and when Karthikeyan was running him very close, one car span and went off the course. The session was suspended temporarily with a red flag. Drivers were required to concentrate their minds on the only one attack in 2min left after the session resumed.

Nojiri calmly finished in 1st and moved on to QF3

Karthikeyan had locked the brake, which caused a big time loss.

Finally QF3 began. Although Nojiri recorded the best time in sector2, he couldn't shorten time much in Sector3, then he finished in 2nd with only 0.009sec behind 1st position.

#40: Tomoyuki Nojiri Position 2nd (QF1 4th, QF2 1st, QF3 2nd) ^{1st among Honda users}

I had a good feeling since the official test, and it continued though the race.

In QF2, I recorded the fastest lap, and I challenged QF3 expecting some change of surface condition. However, I suppose the set-up adjustment was a little conservative for the surface change. Still, I will start from the good position tomorrow, so, I hope to ride out the race without a single mistake and win my first victory this season.



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#41: Narain Karthikeyan Position 11th (QF1 10th, QF2 11th) 4th among Honda users

Having tried several things since the free practice, I learned excellent points of the car, so, I expected a good performance in QF. I challenged QF1 as a test run, and attacked QF2 feeling no doubt I would finish within top 5 until the interruption by a red flag. However, I locked the brake at First Corner right after QF restarted and lost time. I am disappointed all the more because I had confidence.

OKAYAMA is narrow and hard to take over. Good start comes first, and using the overtake system efficiently, I hope to finish the race in upper position.

Translated by Mariko Nakayama



Race Report

2015/5/24 Rd-2 OKAYAMA International Circuit

Weather : Fair Temperature : 26°C 19 cars

Audience : 4,000/23rd (Sat.)、 7,000/24th (Sun) 11,000/total

OKAYAMA International Circuit, where SUPER FORMULA is held for the first time in 7 years, has clear skies and hot summer weather. The temperature going higher and higher, and it is nice day for the race. This relatively short and narrow circuit has short distance from the starting grid to First Corner, thus, a start is more important than at other circuits. Also, the technique to push a car with unwarmed tires right after a start is required for this difficult circuit.

Nojiri, on the front row, made a good start, however, 2 TOYOTA cars flew out ahead. It appeared as if TOYOTA's start-system was superior to HONDA's.

Karthikeyan passed one car and raised one position to 11th.

Team directed him to save tires and fuel, watching other cars move, and decided to Kathikeyan's pit stop on Lap26. After changing 4 tires and filling the tank, they sent him off onto the course again.

On Lap34, they called Nojiri in to the pit, and supplied minimum fuel and changed only rear tires. This strategy was so successful that Nojiri jumped up to 3rd position, and moreover, he ran a close race for 2nd position to the end. Regretfully, he finished the race in 3rd, still on the podium.

Karthikeyan passed 2 cars in second stint, raising his position to 8th in expectation of earning some points. However, during the fight for 7th position, he was pushed out of the course, and dropped to 10th. The fight continued until he finally finished the long 68-lap race in 10th position.

#40: Tomoki Nojiri Position 3rd (1st among HONDA users)

I was sure I had made a good start, but the other 2 cars passed me so quickly that there was nothing I could do. It was tough for my tires to keep up pace with the top group, so I had managed the car considering the situation around. From the middle stage, I could keep a good pace, and thanks to Team strategy, I moved up to 3rd. It didn't turn out well with a fight for 2nd, however, I realized the high capability of the team again. We have a lot to do and will keep progressing towards next round.



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#41: Narain Karthikeyan Position 10th (4th among HONDA users)

I had a good feeling about the car, and I could keep a good pace. I passed 3 cars on the course. The battle for 7th position was fair and fun, and I enjoyed myself even when I was pushed out of the course. Therefore, I am disappointed at my mistake in QF. In SUPER FORMULA, if you make one tiny mistake during QF or race, you will never make it to a top group. I think both me and Team need to be more competitive.

Translated by Mariko Nakayama