



# DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING

## Team Release

### Race Report

#### 2016/10/30 Rd-7 Suzuka Circuit

Weather : Clear Temperature : 19°C 19 cars

Audience : 13,000/29<sup>th</sup> (Sat.)、21,000/30<sup>th</sup> (Sun)

Japanese SUPER FORMULA Championship Final Round, which is also run as JAF GRAND PRIX, will use two-race format as usual, with Race 1 run over 19 laps without a pit stop in the morning, and Race 2 run over 35 laps with the mandatory tire change in the afternoon.

Vandoorne, who finished the season opening, at the same time his first SF race at SUZUKA in 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the podium, took the pole position in Rd3 FUJI Speedway where he had drove for the first time, and won his first victory in Rd5 Okayama. On the other hand, Nojiri took the pole position in Rd5 Okayama and 3<sup>rd</sup> place at SUGO where was his favorite. In this way, DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING has kept earning points constantly, and now has a good chance of winning the season champion in this last round, JAF GRAND PRIX SUZUKA.

Race 1 was held in the morning with 19 laps.

Under the clear blue sky, with the air temperature 19°C and the surface temperature 21°C, it was perfect condition for a race at SUZUKA.

Starting was all the more exciting because there were only 19 laps.

Nojiri kept 4<sup>th</sup> position. Although Vandoorne made a good start for 5<sup>th</sup>, taking a position outside he was still in 7<sup>th</sup> when he reached Turn1. While Nojiri stayed in 4<sup>th</sup> for laps, Vandoorne could not drive faster and he had to fight with Sekiguchi coming closer from behind for a while. Then, at Chicane on Lap14, he was collided by Sekiguchi and span. (Sekiguchi was imposed a penalty for dangerous act.)

Nojiri finish 4<sup>th</sup>, Vandoorne finished 17<sup>th</sup> in Race1

Race 2 was 35-lap race.

It was Vandoorne who got off to a perfect start in the last race of 2016 season. He took the lead at Turn1 and left the following cars far behind. Nojiri who started from 4<sup>th</sup> ran steady keeping the position. More than half of the drivers made a pit stop and changed tires only, but both DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING drivers decided to change tires and fuel up later, after they increase their lead enough. However, since Nojiri had uncomfortable feeling about his steering wheel on Lap13, team instructed him to make a pit stop on Lap14. He went back on track after changing tires and re-fueling, but retired because of power steering trouble after all.



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Vandoorne changed tires and re-fueled on Lap16, and returned to the track staying in 1<sup>st</sup>. The safety car came in twice due to the crashes on Lap24 and Lap29, and Vandoorne made a tremendous re-start both time. Without losing his top position once, he finished the last round with the victory.

#40: Tomoki Nojiri Race 1; 4<sup>th</sup>, Race 2; Retired

2016 Season Driver Ranking 9th (3<sup>rd</sup> among HONDA users)

I wasn't at my best, but I knew that I still had a chance from QF, so I concentrated on the race. In Race 1, I felt something was wrong with my car, and I needed to improve my race pace comparing to the top.

We changed set-up for Race 2, so I had better feeling and I could go into the race positively. I thought the key was from start to a pit stop, and pushed hard. I was disappointed with my retirement because of machine trouble.

I think I had been in good condition all through the season in spite of some bad luck, however, on the other hand, I am reflecting back on what I should have tried harder. I am glad I learned so much from my great teammate, and I appreciate my team which always provided me what I needed, not to mention the best car, all year long.

Thank you very much for your support. Your cheers gave me power!

#41: Stoffel Vandoorne Race 1; 17<sup>th</sup>, Race 2; 1<sup>st</sup>

2016 Season Driver Ranking 4th (1<sup>st</sup> among HONDA users)

In Race 1, I had difficulty in car balance, and couldn't go at a pace. I competed with a following car from the beginning, and I managed to keep the position blocking it fairly. It is a big disappointment that I was collided to lose the race.

I changed set-up a little for Race 2. I had good feeling about my car, and after making a good start, I just pushed hard. The strategy of pit-stop and re-start was perfect, too.

I have participated in Super Formula with DOCOMO TEAM DANDELION RACING in Japan for a year. There were good times and bad times. It hasn't been easy, because SF was very competitive and there were many talented drivers. I have learned much about courses, cars and races, and the experience will be very useful in my career. I am extremely grateful for my team's devoted support and the best jobs, and for many supportive people. It has been a wonderful year!

I will challenge F1 from McLaren Honda next year. Please continue supporting me!

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2016 Season Team Ranking 4th (1st among HONDA users)