

ARTA



May 6, 2024

ARTA Race Report Round 2 FUJISPEEDWAY

■ May 3rd, 2024 (Fri): #8 Qualifying Report

We need to fight through a long race from 4th place to win the race tomorrow.

The team had a good feeling on the condition of #8 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT in the official test held at Fuji in March, and in the morning free practice the #8 showed a favorable result, setting the 3rd fastest time.



To win the pole position, Tomoki Nojiri in charge of Q1 entered the track first. He warmed up the tires thoroughly and went into the time attack. CIVIC TYPE R-GT dominated the top three positions in Q1. Nojiri himself set the second fastest time. Starting from this year, the qualifying rankings are determined based on combined time of Q1 and Q2. There are only about 0.1 seconds from the top position. He still has a chance to overtake the top.

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It was Nobuharu Matsushita who took charge of Q2. He set the fourth fastest time on the attack lap. After completing his attack, Matsushita said that he could not coordinate his driving well, but the time difference between him and the top remained small. To race in the top group to win the race, we need to prepare for the race.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

I guess the result was not bad. Of course since we expected better result, we are not satisfied with it. But at least we had a good feeling. It will be a long race tomorrow. To compete in the top group to win the race at last, we will prepare a lot.



Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

Both Nojiri and Nobu control the car well enough to prove the car is completed. They set the fourth fastest time overall, and the time difference compared to the top position is still so small that I believe as long as we can remain in the top group, we have a chance to stand on the middle of the podium.



Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

Car condition in the official test was so good that I expected a good result this time, but due to change of conditions the car balance was not good in the morning. We then changed its setup for qualifying and Nojiri thankfully showed his impressive performance to set the second fastest time in Q1. So, I was hoping for Matsushita to show the result in Q2, but the car was not adjusted enough to satisfy my expectation.

We will do our best in the race since it will be a long day tomorrow.

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Driver: Tomoki Nojiri

I think we could show our best performance in qualifying session this time. Since we are in 4th position, we believe we still can aim for the top one. The #100 was on the podium in the previous race, so this time we would like to get on the podium. We will do our best to win the race.



Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita

Our result is 4th place in qualifying and which can be regarded positively since the race will last three hours tomorrow. But we still need to look back on the fact that we could not show our performance in Q2. I have no idea how my stint will be like but there must be a chance then I will do my best to win the race.

■ May 4th, 2024 (Sat): #8 Race Report

Both drivers showed wonderful performance, but suddenly slowed down with just a few laps left.

Blessed with clear skies, the temperature at Fuji Speedway was pleasant enough to make it a good day for watching the race. #8 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPER-GT needs to earn a lot of points in this race and advance in the championship. During the warm-up run, the team checked the final set of the car and waited for the start. The race lasts three hours. If there were no race interruptions, SC's or FCY's, there will be 120 laps in this race. Two pit stops with refueling are required.

The starting driver was Nobuharu Matsushita. The race started after one parade lap and formation lap. Matsushita made a cautious start and ran laps in 4th position. From the 9th lap, he caught up with back of the GT300 class group and got a chance to overtake the cars running in front of him, but Matsushita rather concentrated on his driving to avoid being overtaken.



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On lap 16, a GT300 class car stopped, and the first FCY of the race was deployed. The FCY was withdrawn one lap after the car was moved out of the track.

At the 25th lap, there was a 6 second difference between Matsushita and the running in 3rd position. Although his pace did not change much, he could not close the gap.

On lap 33, he made a routine pit stop and Tomoki Nojiri took over him.

By the 41st lap, when all cars had finished their first routine pit stop, Nojiri was running in 4th position. On the 41st lap, he recorded his personal best lap and gradually closed the gap with the car in front but was unable to overtake it. However, he made use of slipstream of the car in front at the final corner on lap 70 and moved up to third position at the first corner on lap 71.



From lap 73, some teams started to make their second routine pit stop. Two hours passed at around 77 laps and 1 hour left. On lap 78, Nojiri made a pit stop and handed the final stint to Matsushita. All cars had finished their pit stops, and by the 80th lap, Nojiri was in 3rd position.

After that, the car in 4th position approached him, and Matsushita ran a dead heat repeatedly for 3rd position in the final stages. Though he was overtaken several times on the straight, he quickly overtook the car back and held on to third position.

But on the 110th lap, he suddenly slowed down on the straight. He took a pit stop and was not able to come back to the track.

He was considered to complete the race but was not able to take the checkered flag. The team needs to figure out the reason as a preparation for the next race.

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**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

It was difficult to catch up with the top 2 cars, but is regrettable not to be able to get 3rd place due to the trouble since we had a chance at least. Both drivers showed their best performance but we could not convert it into the result, which I feel sorry about.

**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

They tried their best to defend the 3rd position. I am sure both Nojiri and Nobu did an excellent job. Though we could not earn any points this time, I would like to give them perfect score, though.

**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

I expected that we could make it to the podium, but #8 encountered some trouble and could not run any further. So disappointing. We could adjust the car and did well in the race, though. We will do our best for the next race.

**Driver: Tomoki Nojiri**

This is a disappointing result since we did well and was about to get on a podium. We need anyway to find out why the trouble happened and figure out how we, drivers can keep higher performance to go faster through communication among drivers and engineers. The result was disappointing, but I could sympathize with Matsushita through his drive and I myself could look forward then I believe this race itself could be a good preparation for the next. I will do my best again next time.

**Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita**

Until the end of the race, Nojiri-san and the team did their best to set things up for me and I simply went along with it, only 7-8 minutes left until the end of the race? Something was wrong with the gear? I do not know exactly what happened, but it was so disappointing. We have to get on the podium when we can, you know. That is all what I can say today.

*Contents of this race report including all pictures are provided by ARTA.

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May 6, 2024

ARTA Race Report

Round 2 FUJISPEEDWAY

■ May 3rd, 2024 (Fri): #16 Qualifying Report

#16 started last due to an unfortunate yellow flag, but they moved up one by one.

#16 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT also performed well in the March official test. But in the morning free practice, the car lacked stability, and the team took part in qualifying with some concerns.



The team reviewed the set of the car as a preparation for the qualifying and sent Hiroki Otsu to Q1. Otsu entered the track following #8. He warmed up his tires thoroughly and went into the attack. The car balance had improved, and he was able to set the third fastest time, and then Ren Sato took the wheel in Q2.

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Sato spun at the first corner on his first attack, but there was still time left in the session, then he tried another attack on the next lap. He set the second fastest time on that attack lap, but due to a yellow signal, his time was erased. #16 has no choice but to start last on the grid tomorrow but since it will be a long race tomorrow, the team wants to fight patiently and earn points.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

The car has been gradually improving. It was very disappointing that Ren ignored the signal by mistake. The signal is located in a position where drivers barely see. Though it was a pity for Ren, he has no choice but to be patient in the race. Both the team and car are heading in a positive direction. We will try our best to get a good result tomorrow.



Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

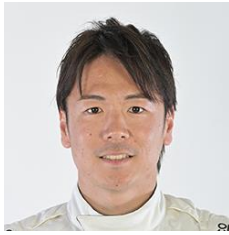
The judge was a bit pitiful for Ren. I checked the monitor and noticed that when he braked and turned in on the left side, the yellow signal was lit on the right side, but it was difficult for him to see it from that position. He could have advanced to 2nd place in Q2 and 4th or 5th overall, so it is frustrating, but it is a long race tomorrow and we would like to overtake cars one by one and score points.



Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

We performed very well in the official test then I expected so today. In the morning session, we were not sure if the car was in good or bad condition. Otsu did his best in 3rd position in Q1, and I expected Sato to show his best performance in Q2, but due to his ignorance of yellow signal, his result 2nd place was cancelled. It was so disappointing, but we have to change our mind and do our best to recover tomorrow.

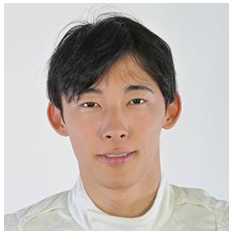
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Driver: Hiroki Otsu

In the free practice I was not able to drive at my best, but as the road temperature went up, the tires worked better, and in Q1, I had a different potential from one in the free practice, then I tried to bring out that potential. However, it somehow went wrong, and I could not take the top position. But I could finish Q1 in 3rd place in Q1 and was able to figure out how to adjust the settings for Q2, and Ren also had a good attack. However, he was judged to have ignored the yellow signal and

ended up starting last on the grid in the race. I will continue to fight persistently till the end.



Driver: Ren Sato

I was in charge of Q2 and was second on the attack lap, but at that time a yellow signal was lit, and my time was erased. I should have checked it properly, but the signal was located in the place where I could not see well. Was I just unlucky? Since it will be a long three-hour race tomorrow, I need to change my mind and prepare for the race.

■ May 4th, 2024 (Sat): #16 Race Report

Problem with the steering system in the final stage? #16 did not take the checkered flag for safety.

Although the team started from 14th position in the race today, the drivers and staff changed their minds and got ready for start of the race to score as many points as possible. It is a three-hour time race, with a battle lasting for approximately 120 laps. Two pit stops with refueling are required. It is Ren Sato who took the wheel first. He recorded the 6th fastest time in the warm-up run, and the balance of the car looks good. Hopefully, he would catch up from 14th position.

Ren Sato got off to a clean start and finished the first lap in 13th position. He overtook the car in front at the final corner of lap 5 but was passed back at the cross line. He continued into the slipstream and was able to recover his position at the first corner. 12th position at this moment. He then overtook another car on the main straight on the next lap and moved up to 11th position. His pace was good.



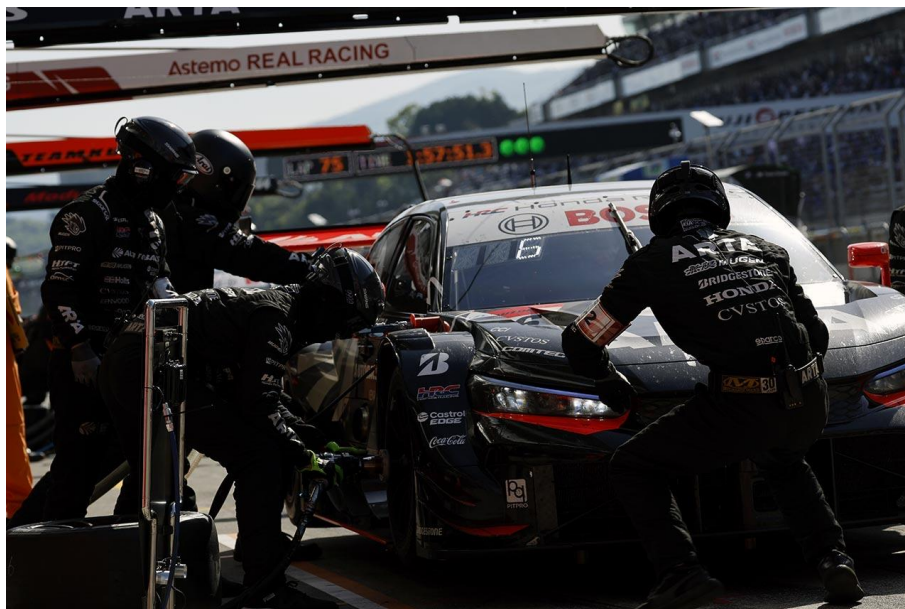
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On lap 12, he caught up with the group fighting for 8th position and looked for a chance. On lap 16, a GT300 class car stopped, and the first FCY of the race was deployed. The FCY was withdrawn one lap after the car was taken out of the track.

After 25 laps, he was 0.6 seconds behind the car in 10th position. Pace of both cars was almost the same then Sato could not overtake the car. On lap 30, he made a routine pit stop and then Hiroki Otsu took over him.

By the 41st lap, when all cars had finished their first routine pit stop, Otsu had successfully moved up to 7th position. His pace was good, but he could not move up his positions and kept on running patiently.

From the 73rd lap, some teams began to make their second routine pit stop, and on the 75th lap, Otsu took a pit stop and was replaced by Sato. Two hours passed at around 77 laps and 1 hour left.



On the 78th lap, one car made use of slipstream to overtake Otsu at the first corner. All cars completed their second pit stop after 80 laps and he was in 9th position.

On lap 95, he complained of a trouble that seemed to have something to do with the steering system and went off the track at 100R. He came back to the pit for inspection.

After finishing the inspection for 14 minutes, Sato left the pit and made a test run, but he could not continue to run and returned to the pit. Although he was treated as a complete racer, he was not able to receive the checkered flag.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

It was good that #16 was able to move up its position to 7th from far back 14th position. Though the pace was good enough to possibly move up positions, they could not make it. It was a pity. We then should make use of this experience for the races from now on, right?

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**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

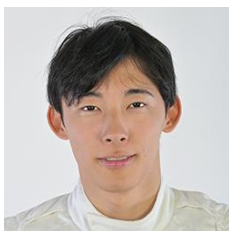
The team did not give up the race even the car started from too far back. I was impressed with their spirits. The fact that they could move up to 7th position explained it. Both drivers did an excellent job.

**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

Though both drivers did their best to move up their positions from 14th position due to some trouble they had no choice but to come back to the pit then we tried to repair the car, but we made a decision not to continue the race considering safety. Since we ran at a good pace, the result was disappointing, but we will make up for it for the next race.

**Driver: Hiroki Otsu**

We started from 14th position. I asked Ren to take the wheel first since he has no such experience in GT500 class. He ran at a good pace in the initial stages, moving up positions and even after I took over him, I could move up positions in my stint assumably thanks to good conditions of the car and tires. During the third stint, the temperature dropped, and I lost some places on my out-lap, but my pace after that was good then I wanted to catch up cars in front. But some trouble occurred. Since I ran within the point range, I could not help regretting. We need to analyze the trouble to find out the cause for the next race.

**Driver: Ren Sato**

Though it was my first-time taking charge of the start, I could manage to run the first stint without making any mistakes. I was also able to gradually move up the positions, and Otsu-san showed an impressive performance, and I took over him in the final stint. Though I was able to run at a good pace during the stint, some trouble occurred in the end of the stint and had to go back to the pit to have it repaired. However, the team decided to stop the race. The race result was disappointing but, I could learn a lot. I will make use of this experience for the next race.

*Contents of this race report including all pictures are provided by ARTA.