

ARTA



April 15, 2024

ARTA Race Report

Round 1 OKAYAMA International Circuit

■ April 13th, 2024 (Sat): #8 Qualifying Report

Matsushita pushed so much that he caused all four wheels to go off, but the machine itself is in great shape so we will aim for as better position as possible.

2024 curtain raiser has just been held here in Okayama International Circuit. Although the temperature was higher than usual, the weather was perfect enough to watch the race. Tomoki Nojiri and Nobuharu Matsushita are listed up as drivers of #8 in this season. Matsushita is a talented driver transferred from other team.



In the pre-season test, we tried various things, and in the final test, we recorded the top time in the newly introduced qualifying simulation. We have just been ready for the opening round in good shape.

No knockout system in the newly introduced qualifying, and the qualifying results are determined based on the accumulated time of Q1 and Q2. The same tires basically need to be used for both Q1 and Q2.

Who will the goddess of victory smile at? The first attacker at Q1 was Nobuharu Matsushita. He crossed the control line just before the end of the session to go on the attack.

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Since he finished the morning session in the 2nd place, he inevitably tried to be the top but pushed so much that he caused all four wheels to go off the track. Though he recorded the 10th fastest time, his time was canceled and he had to start the race from the pit.

I would like to catch up with all other competitors from behind tomorrow.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

Nobu pushed too much. It is difficult to overtake at this track but he had to harshly start from the behind. I felt Nobu's passion clearly in this qualifying. Last year, in this track, we caught up from almost the back end of the pack and could get on the podium. We will never give up and aim for the top.



Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

Up until sector 2, I felt confident that #8 was within the 5th or the 6th position. But (Matsushita) caused all four wheels to go off the track at the final corner. I cannot blame it because he attacked at his best. He should rather be applauded.



Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

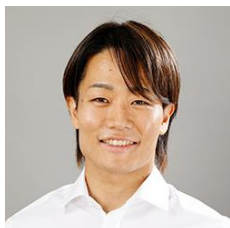
Since #8 was in good condition from the morning session, I was looking forward to satisfactory results in qualifying. In fact, #8 showed superior performance at both sector 1 and 2, but all the four wheels went off the track at sector 3. So regrettable. Though #8 has to start from the pit tomorrow, the team will try their best to catch up.

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Driver: Tomoki Nojiri

The car looks incredibly good, and it is the best condition looking back on that of the pre-season test. And there are clear improvements, which I believe is a positive point. Although we cannot avoid harsh race, I would rather take it positively and attack the race affirmatively considering the next race. I will continue to concentrate on the race. There might be a big chance somehow. I will never give up.



Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita

Thanks to a good condition of the car, I recorded one of the best times at both sector 1 and 2. But I jumped at Mike Knight Corner, and dived into the final corner and then caused all four wheels to go off the track. My time was cancelled. I am confident that the car is tuned up at the top level. There must be a good strategy tomorrow. Though we have no choice but to start from the pit, I would like to catch up somehow.

■ April 14th, 2024 (Sun): #8 Race Report

Although #8 moved up its position owing to SC in the beginning of the race, the team finally ended up with the 8th place.

It is Tomoki Nojiri who takes the wheel of #8 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT as the starting driver. He has to start the race from the pit due to the cancellation of yesterday's qualifying time.

He took a pit stop and waited for the start signal after the parade lap.

When the GT500 class race started and pit work was permitted, #8 was refueled for the parade lap and left the pit.

After all the GT300 class machines passed, he entered the track.



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On the first lap one car went off the track and the safety car was suddenly brought in.

On the third lap all cars stopped to line up on the main straight. As the result, #8 could avoid the risk of overtaking the GT300 class group and reach to the end of the GT500 class. Owing to contact with other cars, he moved up to 12th position.

The race restarted on 7th lap. Nojiri moved up to 11th position and chased the car in front of him.

At the first corner of 20th lap, he moved up one position to 10th within the points and continued to move up his position to 9th on 21st lap. At around lap 29 some teams began to make scheduled pit stops.



#8 took a pit stop on 32nd lap. Nobuharu Matsushita left the pit without any mistakes at the pit work. As of 40th lap he was in 9th position. He overtook the car in front and moved up to 8th position on 45th lap.

After completing laps smoothly until 64th lap, one GT300 class car stopped on the track and FCY was announced. The car was removed right away and the FCY was withdrawn on 66th lap and the race restarted. Then he tried to catch up with the car in front but could not make it. Luckily, Matsushita passed the checkered flag in 8th place and scored points even he started from the last place.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

Matsushita was lucky to get to the back of the GT500 class group owing to SC on the first lap. He could avoid unnecessary risk and got a position to compete with other cars. But we need more speed overall. We will adjust setting by the next round to be able to compete for the top.

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Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

All four wheels went off and Matsushita had to start from the pit in qualifying. But I am glad that #8 still scored the points. The team members and drivers did an excellent job.



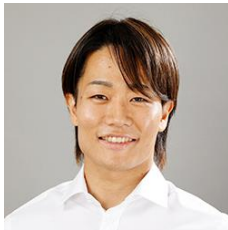
Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

It was good to be able to move up from that position, however, there still are something lacking. We will review the data and adjust setting.



Driver: Tomoki Nojiri

We scored some points somehow. We did what we could do. We will do our best to put ourselves in a position to win next. Please support us.



Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita

The nicest thing about the race was that the safety car was brought in at the beginning, and Nojiri caught up with the GT500 group and handed it over to me. From then on, I was pretty much on my own, and in the first half of the race there were some issues. My pace in the latter half was good, but I was not the fastest, so then I will review three things: tires, setting, and driving and do my best next time.

*Contents of this race report and all the pictures attribute to ARTA.

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ARTA Race Report

Round 1 OKAYAMA International Circuit

■ April 13th, 2024 (Sat): #16 Qualifying Report

The machine is getting better and better, and the team aims for the upper positions from the 8th place tomorrow.

Ren Sato who newly has joined ARTA GT500 in this season used to compete in GT300 as a driver of ARTA GT300 in 2021.

He aims for the championship with his experienced partner Hiroki Otsu.

#16 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT recorded the second fastest time following #8 at newly introduced qualifying simulation of the final pre-season test.



#16 went through the Saturday morning session without any troubles and finished the session in 9th place and was ready for the newly introduced qualifying session.

It was Sato who took the wheel at Q1 session and finished his first GT500 qualifying session in 12th place. Though the car condition was improved compared to that in the morning session, it had needed further improvement and then was adjusted, and Otsu took over the wheel for Q2.

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Otsu had appeared on the track 4.5 mins before the session ended. Presumably owing to some advice from Sato at Q1 regarding car adjustment, the car balance was dramatically improved, and Otsu could shave off 0.3 seconds and finished Q2 in 8th place.

The team has an intention to compete to get much better results tomorrow.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

The team seemed groping in the dark in the morning session. But then they figured out how to improve the machine. I could realize how high potential this team has! I believe that #16 can compete in the race with better condition tomorrow. I want them to surely get some points.



Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

The team made the most of all the potentials #16 currently possessed. I hope they can show their further performance to aim for the series championship.



Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

Due to poor balancing, #16 could not show its speed performance in the morning session. Even in Q1 the team was not able to fix the setting and just before the Q2 session the setting was adjusted, and the team could cut the time. It is a pity that they took too much time. Though it is the very first time for us to compete in the race with CIVIC, we will do the best to show our stable performance to achieve a good result!

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Driver: Hiroki Otsu

In the morning session our performance was not good, but the team improved the car before the qualifying session and with additional adjustment thanks to Ren's advice, I could drive the further improved car in Q2. I tried the newly introduced format qualifying and it was the first time for me to compete in the qualifying with used tires. I believe this experience can lead to a good result of the next race. Since the car was improved dramatically, I am confident I can make use of such an improvement and try to show my best performance tomorrow.



Driver: Ren Sato

My very first qualifying session in GT500 has just ended. Though the car was not so good in the formal practice sessions, it was gradually improved through Q1 and Q2. In the end thanks to Mr. Otsu cutting the time, we can start from 8th position tomorrow. I made some mistakes in the qualifying session and there are some points I need to look back on, but at the same time I will change my mind and try my best to earn some points tomorrow.

■ April 14th, 2024 (Sun): #16 Race Report

Time loss at pit stop is regrettable, but the team could show their performance leading to the next round.

#16 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT whose balance was dramatically improved in the previous qualifying session confirmed its setting through the warm-up session and waited for the start signal.

The starting driver was Otsu and he started out without losing positions, but other car went out of track and a safety car appeared. Otsu was in his 7th position then.



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All the participants stopped to adjust positions on the main straight on the 3rd lap. The safety car led them for some laps. Due to contact among other cars, Otsu got the 6th position. The race restarted on the 7th lap. He kept the position stably for a while.

Though the pace itself was stable, due to heavy traffic he lost one position at the corner of 19th lap. He took the scheduled pit stop on 35th lap but the team lost time due to tire (front left) change.



Ren Sato took the wheel at the second stint. 10th position on 40th lap. The car going in front of Sato took a pit stop and then he got the 9th position on 52nd lap. Sato drove at a good pace but could not find a chance to overtake other cars.

On 65th lap a GT300 machine stopped on the track and FCY was declared. The car was removed right away and FCY was withdrawn on 66th lap. Then the race restarted.

Sato kept up his rapid pace but could not grasp a chance to overtake. He ended up the first GT500 race in 9th place and successfully gained points.



Director: Aguri Suzuki

It is regrettable for the team to be stuck with tire change. We need to verify it to avoid another mistake. At the same time, we need to verify the reason we could not increase the pace on the first stint as a preparation for the next race.

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Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya

It was good to keep up a good pace and gain points at the latter half of the race. But the overall pace is not good yet. We need to improve it till the next round.



Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka

The pace was so slow that distance between #16 and other cars in front increased. In the latter half of the race, we could keep up a good pace. Since we selected the same tires, we need to figure out the reasons why such a difference occurred. Compared to the time of the champion, we are still lacking the pace. We need analyze the driving data.



Driver: Hiroki Otsu

In the beginning of the race, I could pass through the piles of the cars so smoothly that I could gain position, but then had difficulty with increasing the pace. In the latter half of the race, I could let Ren take over the wheel without losing positions. Ren also was fast enough to gain points and, which I believe will lead to the next race.



Driver: Ren Sato

I am happy to gain points in my debut race. Though we made a mistake at pit stop, I myself could drive the car without any pressures, which I believe was good for the rest of the season. I could keep a good pace and the race itself was positive one. I would like to show my best performance since I did good in the test session at Fuji.

*Contents of this race report and all the pictures attribute to ARTA.