

# ARTA



April 15, 2025

## ARTA Race Report

### Round 1 OKAYAMA International Circuit

#### ■ April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sat): #8 Qualifying Report

**Due to morning trouble, #8 finished the qualifying session in 12<sup>th</sup> place, but we want #8 to get as many points as possible tomorrow**

Drivers for #8 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT remain the same this year, combination of Tomoki Nojiri and Nobuharu Matsushita. We are looking forward to seeing their second-year combination, with a deeper understanding of each other.

The same monocoque is shared by the three manufacturers in the GT500 class, but which is changed to a new monocoque every three years. This year is the year of replacement, then all the cars will be new.



During the morning free practice, while Matsushita was driving, the engine showed symptoms of not revving up, and he took a pit stop. After checking, a problem occurred with the exhaust system. He was not able to proceed with the settings and gave up the free practice.

The mechanics tried to repair it in time for qualifying, and somehow managed to make it in time for the qualifying session in the afternoon.

The knockout system has been revived for this year's qualifying and Nojiri was chosen as the Q1 driver and Matsushita Q2.

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Since the team was not able to find the right settings in the morning session, they had no choice but to face a very tough qualifying.



Nojiri tried to advance to Q2 with the car whose setting was not fixed. He showed his best performance but could only post a time good enough for 12<sup>th</sup> place.

He missed a chance to advance to Q2 and finished the qualifying session in 12<sup>th</sup> place.

Since the conditions will be different tomorrow and we believe we still have a chance, we want to earn as many points as possible.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

We had some unexpected troubles, and it is unfortunate for both drivers that we could not let them run. But it is no use crying over spilt milk, we want to run to the end of the race tomorrow to have a good race.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

We had some problems during the morning session and lost power, so we could not make any progress with the setting. It is unfortunate that we could not make a chance to let Nojiri run with new tires in this session. We ended up qualifying without doing anything, but I believe we will have a chance tomorrow and then surely would like to get some points.



**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

The set we prepared in advance brought about unexpected results, then we tried to adopt the #16's information to adjust it, but we could not run due to an exhaust system problem, which affected qualifying. We could not advance to Q2 due to the fact that Nojiri was unable to attack with new tires in the morning. We will do our best to earn points tomorrow.

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## **Driver: Tomoki Nojiri**

There was trouble in the free practice session, and we were not able to show our best performance. We could not bring the car to its peak in the qualifying, but it seems to rain, and conditions will be different from today's. I am sure there still is a chance. We will not give up and concentrate on the race tomorrow.



## **Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita**

We have been doing a lot of testing before the season, but we had an unexpected problem in the FP. Nojiri was in charge of Q1, but I am afraid it must have been a difficult situation for him with almost no driving data. Since it will rain tomorrow, I want to run a strong race to survive and surely earn points and use this race to lead to the next one.

## **■ April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sun): #8 Race Report**

**The two drivers fought well in spite of the harsh weather. They were penalized but earned points in 7<sup>th</sup> place**

In stark contrast to yesterday's clear weather, it was raining at Okayama International Circuit this morning. The rain was forecast to weaken around noon, but there was no sign of it stopping and the free practice began. During the free practice, Nojiri Tomoki checked the balance and handed it over to Nobuharu Matsushita. Matsushita ultimately recorded the top time, and expectations were high for how much he could improve his position in the race.

The starting driver was Nojiri. Due to the heavy rain, the parade lap by the Okayama Prefectural Police was canceled, and the race started under the safety car.

The safety car was lifted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap and the start was made, but a multiple crash occurred just after the first corner. Unfortunately, teammate #16 Sato Ren was caught up in the accident. But fortunately, he was uninjured.



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The safety car was deployed again, but the race was temporarily suspended under a red flag to remove the car and rescue the drivers. The race restarted on the 6<sup>th</sup> lap with the safety car running.

Nojiri was in 9<sup>th</sup> position at this point. The race restarted on the 10<sup>th</sup> lap as the rain started to let up. He carefully rounded the first corner and kept his position, but the double hairpin battle caused him to drop to 11<sup>th</sup> position. As he approached the 13<sup>th</sup> lap, another car went off the track at the first corner. The safety car was deployed again. At this point, he was in 10<sup>th</sup> position.

The race restarted on the 18<sup>th</sup> lap. The car in front of him went off the track at the first corner, and he moved up to 9<sup>th</sup> position. On the 21<sup>st</sup> lap, two GT300 class cars collided with each other, went off track, and an FCY was deployed, but the race restarted the following lap.

After the 33<sup>rd</sup> lap, some teams started making their routine pit stops, and Nojiri's position was 8<sup>th</sup>. He overtook the car in front of him to move up to 7<sup>th</sup> place, and on the following lap he made his routine pit stop and was handed over to Nobuharu Matsushita. Matsushita returned to the race in 9<sup>th</sup> place.



Matsushita was successful in undercutting and moved up to 6<sup>th</sup> position on the 48<sup>th</sup> lap. The track gradually began to dry, and more and more GT300 class cars switched to dry tires.

As the tires gradually began to wear out, Matsushita lost one position on the 56<sup>th</sup> lap but regained his position when the car in front of him went wide in a corner. On the 59<sup>th</sup> lap, Matsushita took a pit stop. He changed to dry tires and returned to the track. Matsushita's pace was good, and with other cars pitting, he was in 5<sup>th</sup> place on the 63<sup>rd</sup> lap. On the 65<sup>th</sup> lap another car came on the inside and made contact. That car went off the track at ATTWOOD CURVE, an FCY was implemented, and the safety car was put into operation. On the 70<sup>th</sup> lap, all cars stopped on the straight, lined up, and the safety car was put into operation again. The race restarted on the 72<sup>nd</sup> lap with 10 laps remaining.

Towards the end of the race, using a GT300 class car, Matsushita engaged in a fierce battle with the car in front of him, and finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place.



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However, during the battle, he drove too hard, which resulted in a 40-second penalty being added to his final result, and he ultimately finished in 7<sup>th</sup> place. It was a disappointing result considering how well he had fought, but the battle between the two encouraged the team.



## **Director: Aguri Suzuki**

Two drivers showed their best performance. Nojiri handed the car over to Nobu within the points despite the car's poor balance, and I think Nobu's advice on internal pressure was also useful in Nobu's great battle. The result dropped a little after the penalty, but the morale of the whole team was raised. After the checkered flag, it felt like we had won. We needed to be careful not to get penalized, but I want to continue racing like this.



## **Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

Both of them did a great job. It may not have been very noticeable, but I think Nojiri's perseverance was an important part of this race. I believe he was able to pass that on to Nobu well, which is why he was able to have a good race in the second half. There may be a difference between us and the top teams, but if we can race like this, I think we will be able to compete for the top spot.



## **Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

Nojiri managed to move up the position and hand it over to Nobu in difficult conditions. The timing of the pit stop was also difficult, but we are glad to have been able to change tires at the right time. We ended up in 7<sup>th</sup> place after receiving a penalty, but I am glad we were able to move up to provisional 4<sup>th</sup> place because it also helped improve the atmosphere in the team.



## **Driver: Tomoki Nojiri**

The pace was not very good, but I knew it would turn out like this, but I was able to hand it over to Nobu while thinking that it was important to keep my excitement under control and bring the car home. I am certain that we were able to get this far thanks to Nobu's driving and the team's good decisions in the second half. In the end, I dropped from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> position due to a penalty, but I would like to drive better to contribute to the result.



## **Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita**

We started with some trouble and the flow was not very good, but I think it was good that we were able to battle at the top. Tomoki's feedback was also important advice for fighting in the second half. Thanks to that, I was able to have a good battle, however, I received a penalty and ended up in 7<sup>th</sup> place. It was not intentional, but I need to be careful from next time onwards and earn a lot of points.

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

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April 15, 2025

## ARTA Race Report

### Round 1 OKAYAMA International Circuit

#### ■ April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sat): #16 Qualifying Report

**Otsu passed second in Q1, but Sato got stuck in front of the car in front in Q2 and finished qualifying in 8<sup>th</sup> place**

The #16 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT is driven by the same drivers as Otsu Hiroki and Sato Ren last year. We are looking forward to seeing the performance of the stable Otsu and the promising young Sato in their second year.

This year, ARTA has also welcomed WAKO CHEMICAL as a new partner, and the team has adopted a blue-based color design for the first time. We would like to win the race with a renewed spirit.

#16 started the morning session well, recording the second fastest time. Qualifying results were expected.



Otsu was in charge of Q1 where the knockout system was revived. He appeared on the track with 8 minutes remaining in the 10-minute session. He warmed up the tires thoroughly and began his time attack. The car was in so good condition that he recorded the second fastest time and advanced to Q2.

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But Sato, who was in charge of Q2, got stuck behind another car during his attack and could not show his best performance and ended up in 8<sup>th</sup> place. It was a disappointing result, especially since the car was in good condition.

But I believe there is a chance to make up for it tomorrow, so we would like to continue preparations to aim for the podium.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

Otsu's driving in Q1 was good. It was a very promising performance. In Q2, the top two cars set amazing times and rewrote the course record, but I think Ren had the same potential as one of them. That is why his attack in Q2 was regrettable. We will do our best to make up for it tomorrow.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

I was a little excited cause he was in good shape since the morning. I had imagined Otsu coming back in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Q1 and Ren finishing Qualifying in the top place in Q2, but they got stuck behind another car. It is a shame. But the car is in good condition, and I believe we can make up for it, so we will do our best tomorrow to aim for the top.



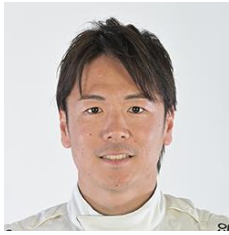
**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

The feeling was good from the start of the run, and the choice of tires we brought with us was so good that we were able to finish the session in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, which I think was a good start. Otsu was second in Q1, Ren was in Q2, and Ren was in good condition, so expectations were high, but the gap with the front was too close on the attack lap, and as a result we could not show our best performance. It is frustrating because we had a car that could go to the top, but we want to do our best

tomorrow.

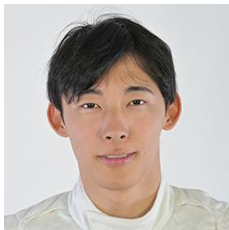


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## Driver: Hiroki Otsu

In the morning session, we were second, and our time was good, but there were some issues that we wanted to improve regarding the feeling of the car. We adjusted such issues and went into qualifying. As the overall times were improving, we were able to improve our times as well, and we were able to pass Q1, which I was in charge of, in 2<sup>nd</sup> position, so I think that was good. We thought the conditions would be better for Q2, so we did not make any strange adjustments and went into Q2, but Ren got stuck behind the car in front and we could not improve our time as we wanted. I regret coming back to 8<sup>th</sup> place. It was a tough result. Tomorrow's conditions are uncertain, but the car has a lot of potential the I would like to do my best to aim for the podium.



## Driver: Ren Sato

The car has been running well since the morning, and the long run adjustments went well during the exclusive run. I tried using a different tire range, and the feeling was good, so I was looking forward to qualifying. Otsu-san set the second fastest time in Q1 and handed it over to me. I wanted to get into the top ranks in Q2, but I got stuck behind another car and could not make it, and which was disappointing. But the car is running so well that I would like to work hard to improve my position and bring home a good result.

## ■ April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sun): #16 Race Report

### Caught in a spin by another car, Sato retired without racing, but is eager for the next race

In the free practice before the start at Okayama International Circuit, where it had been raining since the morning, Sato Ren recorded the top time early on.

The balance of the car seems good. Hiroki Otsu also had a good average time, and although he ended up in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, he seems to have maintained his good form from yesterday.





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The starting driver was Sato. Due to the heavy rain, the parade lap was canceled and the race started under the safety car. The safety car was lifted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap and the start was made, but after passing the first corner, he was caught in a spin by another car, made contact, and was not able to drive, which unfortunately led to retirement.



Since the overall performance was good, it is very regrettable that the race ended without a proper race, but we will change our mindset and take on the next race.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

It was an unavoidable accident and there was nothing we could do about it. However, we have been doing well all this time, so it is regrettable that this happened. But the team and the driver have made a good car then I hope we can maintain the same performance at Fuji next time and run to the end.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

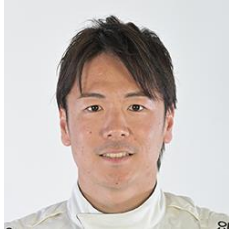
It is frustrating because we were doing well. I have had a lot of similar experiences, but it is frustrating. But it is over now, so we will do our best to maintain that good form next time and get a good result in the race.



**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

I think that accident at the first corner was unavoidable and there was nothing we could do about it. That is the truth. We will just have to do our best next time.

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**Driver: Hiroki Otsu**

I felt pretty good during the warm-up then I felt like I could do well in the rainy race. There was nothing I could do about that accident, it was a crash that I could not do anything about, so I cannot say anything. I will prepare for the next race.



**Driver: Ren Sato**

I crashed at the start, that is all about it, but I think if I had gotten a position further forward in the qualifying round, I could have reduced this risk, so I feel sorry for the mechanics, but I will ask them to repair my car, and I would like to aim for the win at the next race at Fuji.

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