

# ARTA



June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## ARTA Race Report

### Round 3 Sepang

#### ■ June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sat): #8 Qualifying Report

**After sluggish free practice, #8 has improved and secured a front row finish!**

This is the first time in 12 years since 2013 that a Super GT race has been held here in Malaysia. The last overseas race was held in Buriram, Thailand in 2019, before the spread of the COVID-19. That means overseas races this time could be held after a long period of time.

In past races in Malaysia, the start time has often been around 3:00 pm to avoid the hottest time of the day, but this time the start time has been delayed even further, with the race starting at 4:30 pm and the checkered flag scheduled to cross the finish line at 6:30 pm.

In the free practice session that began on Thursday, the team struggled to achieve the desired times. Some people said that the tire rubbers from the support race were still left on the track, and that the track did not match well with the tires of the GT cars.

It is not clear if this was the cause or not, but #8 ARTA MUGEN CIVIC TYPE R-GT ended up sinking behind the group.



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In the second free practice session, held in the morning on qualifying day, #8 managed to recover to 4th place, but it was unclear if #8 could be able to secure a good position in qualifying.

Nobuharu Matsushita made his attack in Q1. During the free practice, Matsushita was unable to achieve the desired time, and everyone wondered if he was in poor condition, but he managed to dispel such concerns and post the 6th fastest time, handing over the baton to Tomoki Nojiri for Q2.



Nojiri waited in the pit for a while before re-entering the track, but another car had a minor fire, causing the race to be suspended with a red flag.

Fortunately, the red flag appeared before the tires had been heated up and then #8 was able to preserve the tires.

The qualifying session resumed, and Nojiri heated up the tires for three laps before attacking on the 4th lap. He completed a brilliant lap and successfully recorded the 2nd fastest time.

Since #8 will be starting from the front row, the team hopes #8 to make a good start in the race and achieve a good result in Malaysia for the first time in a while.



## **Director: Aguri Suzuki**

I was worried that we would not be able to get a high-ranking judging from the results of Thursday's free practice, but the drivers and the team have worked hard and climbed up to this point. I was also worried that Matsushita was not in good shape, but he showed such a good performance at the end and such worries disappeared. We wish to fight hard tomorrow to get a good result.

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**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

I was a bit worried about how the first free practice would go, but the drivers and the team managed to make it work. We will focus on the race to avoid any troubles or mistakes.



**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

We made a good choice of tires and were able to drive safely in both Q1 and Q2. Nojiri also showed a good performance in Q2, and we were able to line up on the front row of the grid. Our race pace seems good, too. We will do our best.



**Driver: Tomoki Nojiri**

I was a bit confused that the conditions were different from those in the test from the beginning, but I was able to adjust and get a good position in qualifying. I would like to do my best to get my revenge on the previous race.



**Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita**

I think I was able to draw a better running curve compared to FP1. I was in 6th place in Q1 and was in 2nd in Q2. I doubt it is meaningful unless I win, but I think since we have made the foundation to win, I would like to prepare well enough to win the race.

## ■ June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sun): #8 Race Report

### **At one point #8 was in the lead, but was undercut during pit work, and returned to 2nd place to take the checkered flag**

The temperature was around 31-32°C, which was not too high, but the humidity was so high that the drivers might easily exhaust themselves.

During the warm-up session, the team checked the set-up for the race as usual. The time here is not a good indicator of speed, but #8 finished the session in 10th place.

The starting driver was Nobuharu Matsushita. The Malaysian and Japanese national anthems were played, and after the formation lap the race started.

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Matsushita kept his position and came back to the home straight. The pace of the leading car was good, and instructions were sent over the radio from the pit not to let the leader get away. Matsushita hung on to the leader and continued to make laps.

At one point Matsushita was two seconds behind, but on the 7th lap, when the GT-300 class lapped cars started to appear, he closed in on the leader, and at the hairpin on the 8th lap he passed the leader on the inside and took the lead. There was a lot of excitement in the pit. After that, he gradually pulled away from 2nd position runner, and on the 21st lap he pitted, handing the second half of the race over to Tomoki Nojiri.



Nojiri returned to the track in 7th position, but the rain seemed to have fallen at corner 12. There were only a few rain clouds. It did not seem to affect the road conditions, but since the rain was forecast, he continued to drive with caution.



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By the time all the cars had pitted on the 32nd lap, Nojiri was in 2nd position. He was undercut, but he stayed right behind the top car and watched the situation. He was occasionally blocked by the GT-300 cars, but he kept a margin of about one second and chased the leader. However, the pace of the top car was fast, and Nojiri was gradually left behind.

Although Nojiri's pace was not slow, it was not at the level of the top cars. In the end, #8 managed to take the checkered flag in 2nd place. Since the results in the first and second races were disappointing, the team hopes this will be a sign of recovery.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

I was a little hopeful because Nobu took the lead, but the winning team's car was very stable. We need to reach that level and surpass it and also need to prepare well for the middle stages of the season.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

Our condition was not good before the qualifying, but we managed to recover and get 2nd place. In the race we could not keep up with the pace of the leaders though, both Nobu and Nojiri were fighting for the top spot. I am relieved that we have finally made it back here. We came in 2nd place this time, but from next time onwards we will do our best to take the lead in the championship.



**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

Nobu was consistently fast, and I was glad he was able to hand the race over to Nojiri in the lead. However, the leading car was not only fast, but their pit work was also quick enough to move forward, but we also had speed, and we did not make any mistakes either in our pit work. I am very disappointed at this result.

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**Driver: Tomoki Nojiri**

Matsushita kept me in the lead, but it was difficult to pick up the pace anymore, and the leading car's pit work was so fast that I was not able to get ahead. I had one chance to take the lead, but honestly speaking, I could not keep up with that pace. I will try my best again next time.



**Driver: Nobuharu Matsushita**

Overall, I think it went well. I was afraid it was no good at the start of the race, but it got better with each run, and in the first stint, I was able to get to the top as planned. I handed the baton over to Nojiri. The leading car had only had a short refueling time, which allowed them to get ahead. They also had a faster pace. I would like to work harder on that for the next race.

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

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June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## ARTA Race Report

### Round 3 Sepang

#### ■ June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sat): #16 Qualifying Report

**Incomplete performance in Q1.  
We want to disappoint everyone in a good way in the race**

This is our first race in Malaysia in 12 years, and our first overseas races in six years since the 2019 Thailand race.

The winter test took place here in Sepang in January, with #16 car drivers Otsu Hiroki and Sato Ren also taking part in.



Having had a good feeling in the test, Otsu, who recorded the second-fastest time early in the first free practice session, felt confident.

Considering the race, harder tires were chosen for the qualifying and Sato was entrusted with Q1.

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#16 was sent out onto the track at a time when the tire grip was about to reach its peak as the road conditions improved towards the end of the race, but just when #16 was about to launch another lap of attack, the checkered flag came out, making Q1 an incomplete session and the team was not able to advance to Q2.

Although #16 will be starting from the back of the pack, it has plenty of potential to move up the ranks. We would like to expect #16 to make a comeback in the race.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

We may have misjudged the timing to send the #16 out onto the track in Q1, but since I am certain that we were pinpointing the spot where we could get a good time, no one can blame us for that. If all goes well in the race, I think we can get a position that will make all the fans happy. I am sure this car, drivers and team have much potential. Please look forward to the race.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

It is a disappointing result considering how fast we were. I think there were a lot of things that we could not predict, but the most important thing is the result of the race. We will fight hard in the race and do our best to bring out the potential of the car and the drivers.



**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

Session in the morning was not bad, and I felt that the tires we chose were usable during the morning practice, but perhaps we were trying too hard to use the tires to their full potential. We will do our best to prepare tomorrow so that we can make up for it.



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## **Driver: Hiroki Otsu**

Since we had been able to do a test here in January, we came here with an understanding of the driving data and the balance of the car. However, the conditions were quite different then, and it was very difficult to adapt to the new conditions. We were not very positive about the choice of tires, as the track temperature was dropping and we had no choice but to choose harder tires. Therefore, we were not able to perform well in Q2. However, we believe that these tires will be

competitive in tomorrow's race, we will switch gear and do our best.



## **Driver: Ren Sato**

In qualifying we ran with different spec tires from ones in the free practice session. They did not work as well as we expected, and we did not have enough warm-up laps. We were not able to attack as we wanted and could not get the full potential out of our car. Although we will be starting from the back, I do not think our pace in the race is bad, we will not give up and aim for the top.

## **■ June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Sun): #16 Race Report**

**The difference in the compound could not be fully utilized and did not translate into good performance, but we look forward to the next race**

The weather was good from the morning, and there was not a single Malaysian downpour from the start of the race until the race.

The starting driver was Hiroki Otsu. He kept his position at the start and entered the first corner, but there was contact during the interruption, and he moved up to 12th position.

He was running at a steady pace, but then his pace slowed down and by the 10th lap he had dropped to 14th position.



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From the 20th lap, some cars started making their routine pit stops. Otsu was temporarily in 3rd position due to other cars pitting. He continued to complete laps at a steady pace of 1 minute 56-57 seconds.

On the 31st lap, Otsu made a pit stop and Ren Sato took over the car and returned to the track in 13th position. Sato set a new personal best time on the 39th lap and was chasing the cars in front at the same lap time as the leading group.



On the 43rd lap, Otsu managed to move up one position to 12th. He was about 5 seconds behind 10th place, which was within the points range, but there were no laps left, and he ended the race in 12th place. This time the team had a good balance at the start of the race, but lost their momentum halfway through, they would like to make up for it the next time the team enters the middle stage of the race.



**Director: Aguri Suzuki**

I am sorry for all the people who have been supporting us because we have not been getting good results. But it is not that the car or the drivers are lacking in speed. We surely want to make a comeback and join the fight for the championship.



**Executive Advisor: Keiichi Tsuchiya**

The start of the race was going well, so it is disappointing that the result did not come out as planned. One reason could be that it was difficult to use the tires. Since both the car and the drivers have the potential to win, we will try to make the most of that. We will do our best next time.

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**Director: Hirokatsu Tanaka**

We brought tires with a different compound, but we were not able to use them well throughout the weekend, which was the reason we lost the race. Our pace was good towards the end. We needed to be able to show that earlier in order to get a higher qualifying position. We will be preparing for the next race.



**Driver: Hiroki Otsu**

I thought it would be tough in the beginning because we were using hard tires, but I was able to gradually move up the ranks and keep my position. However, the tires were hard for the road temperature, and there was also the effect of pickups. I could not pick up the pace and it is frustrating that I could not drive the way I wanted to. Ren also had good pace, but it was not enough to overtake other cars. I think we need to pick up the pace in both qualifying and the race.



**Driver: Ren Sato**

I was in charge of the second half of the stint, and I believe the pace was good after I came out of the pits. I was able to catch up with other cars, but I only managed to pass only one car. Once I got to the back of the pack, it was difficult to make any further overtakes. I felt that we needed to build up a car that was strong for the race. I will review everything from the beginning, through the qualifying and race, and do

my best.

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