

ARTA



April 13th, 2026

ARTA Race Report Round 1 Okayama

■ April 11th, 2026 (Sat): #8 Qualifying Report

Otsu crashes in Q1, red flag interruption, and the car starts from the back of the grid in the race

The 2026 SUPER GT season has finally begun. This year, the team has established a cooperative relationship with HRC, changed its name to Team HRC ARTA MUGEN, and aims for the championship. The team manager is Aguri Suzuki, and the first driver is Kakunoshin Ohta, who recently achieved two consecutive victories in SUPER FORMULA and is in great momentum.

The second driver has moved from car No. 16 to car No. 8, and is Hiroki Otsu, known for his speed and setting ability. This most powerful combination will compete in this season.



This morning in Okayama, the weather was sunny, but the temperature went up more like early summer than spring as the morning free practice session began. While working on the settings as the team went through the running menu, they could not quite get the car's setup in the direction they wanted.

The team finished in 9th place, but the gap to the leader was not as large as they had imagined.

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In the first qualifying session of the year, Hiroki Otsu took charge of Q1. After warming up the tires, he began his attack lap. He aimed for a top position with a powerful attack, but lost control at Mike Knight Corner and went off track.



Unable to stop in time, he crashed into the barrier, damaging the front of his vehicle. He was unable to continue driving, and the race was red flagged. Because he caused the red flag, he will start from the back of the grid in tomorrow's race.

He hopes to repair his car before tomorrow's race and fight his way back from the back of the grid.



Comments from Team Manager Aguri Suzuki:

The car's balance was not very good from free practice. The crash is unfortunate, but it is good that Otsu was not injured. It is tough for the mechanics, but we will repair the car before the race and try our best to get as many points as possible.



Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:

Our position in the morning session was not that great, but looking at the times, the gap was not that big. I then believed that we could definitely compete if we adjusted to qualifying. But unfortunately, we got off track and crashed. We will repair it by tomorrow and do our best in tomorrow's race.

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Comments from Driver Kakunoshin Ohta:

First of all, I am glad that Otsu was not injured. We tried to recover even though the feeling in the official practice was not that great. However, there were numerous factors that led to the crash. We need to investigate the entire team, including the vehicle, to find out the cause for our advantageous race tomorrow. I believe the mechanics will work hard to fix it. I would like to send them my best wishes.



Comments from Driver Hiroki Otsu:

I was not feeling very good from free practice and then changed the car for Q1. I thought I could do two attack laps and I pushed from the first lap. At Mike Knight Corner, where the crash occurred, the car bounced, and it went beyond my control, causing me to get off track and crash. I feel really sorry for everyone on the team. Tomorrow I will be starting from the back of the grid, but I want to make a strong comeback and race to score points.

■ April 12th, 2026 (Sun): #8 Race Report

Mechanics' Diligent Efforts to Repair the Machine, Identifying Challenges for the Next Race

The #8 ARTA MUGEN HRC PRELUDE-GT suffered from front-end damage during qualifying, but thanks to the mechanics' diligent repairs, it was somehow able to run again.

Free practice confirmed that the car could run without any issues, but the team aimed to climb into the points-scoring positions before the checkered flag.

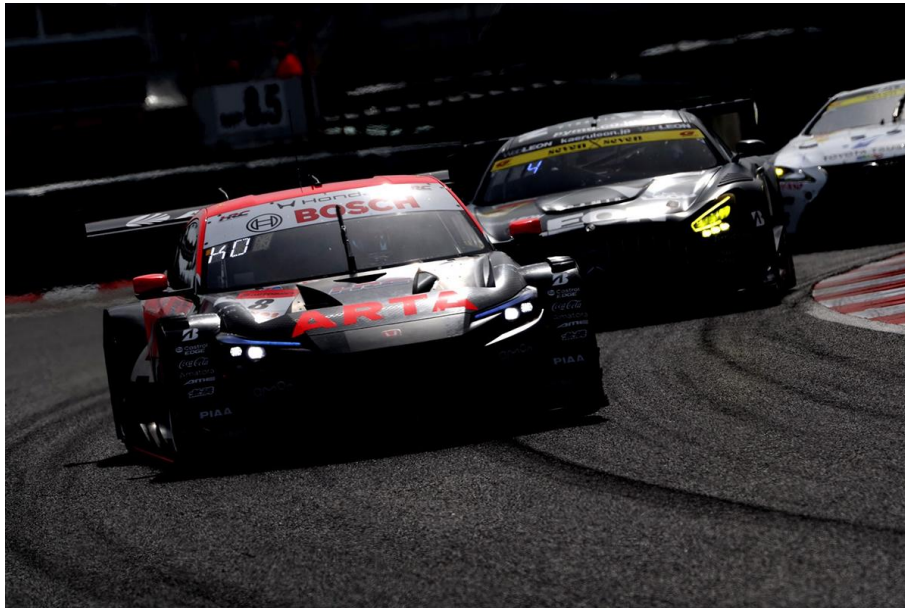
The starting driver was Hiroki Otsu. From the grid, he radioed all the staff who had repaired the car, expressing his gratitude and determination before the start. For the first few laps, he observed from the back, waiting for an opportunity.



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Due to a penalty stop by the car in front, he moved up to 12th place by lap 5. By lap 11, he was 11th, and by lap 12, he had climbed to 10th place, within the points-scoring positions. The pace was good, and the car's balance seemed good.

There were no changes in position until lap 29, but around that time routine pit stops began, and by lap 38, they were in the lead. Otsu's strategy was to extend his routine pit stop as long as possible, using it to close the gap to the car in front.



On lap 43, they took a pit stop and handed over to Ohta Kakunoshin. Refueling took longer than expected, and they rejoined the track in 13th place. Ohta's pace was fast, consistently posting times in the 1 minute 22 second range, and by lap 49, he had moved up to 12th place. He struggled to overtake the 11th car, but on lap 62, he finally managed to pass and chased the 10th car, which was within striking distance.

Ohta's pace was good enough, and by lap 70, to be right behind the 10th car. The cars were bunched up to 9th place, and with a chance, he could move up to 9th place.

In the midst of the close battle, by lap 76, the leading car was closing in from behind. Although their pace was comparable to the leading cars, the blue flag was waved, causing them to be lapped. They closed in on the 10th-placed car, but the checkered flag was waved, and the team finished its opening race in 11th place.



Comments from Team Manager Aguri Suzuki:

First of all, I would like to thank the mechanics and staff for thoroughly repairing the car. There were various concerns, but the race pace was good, and we were able to confirm that the car was properly repaired. We also identified areas for improvement in this race. We will work hard to apply what we learned for the next race.

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Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:

We cannot see the top spot yet, but the pace was better than expected. The starting position was disappointing. However, since the leaders are still very fast, we will do our best next time.



Comments from Driver Kakunoshin Ohta:

At the start, Mr. Otsu helped us gain positions until I took over, and we adopted a strategy to delay the pit stop as much as possible. The pace was good and I thought I could overtake the cars in front, but I lacked the power to pass them resulting in a disappointing 11th place finish. There were some areas where I could have done better. I will do my best next time.



Comments from Driver Hiroki Otsu:

After the start, I was able to overtake others on my own, and when I was running around 10th or 9th place, everyone around me pitted after the minimum number of laps. My position kept moving up. However, I was also worried about fuel consumption and then my pace was not very good. I changed my strategy midway through and increased my pace by using more fuel and tires. Naturally, my fuel consumption worsened, and as a result, the refueling time became longer, and when

Ohta went out onto the track, I had dropped positions. Ohta's comeback from there was incredible, but it was not enough to score points. There were many areas for improvement in preparation for the race after yesterday's crash, and I was able to try out various things in this race. I believe it was a race that will lead to future races.

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

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April 13th, 2026

ARTA Race Report

Round 1 Okayama

■ April 11th, 2026 (Sat): #16 Qualifying Report

New combination of Nojiri and Sato Ren starts from 6th place in the race

As already announced, Keiichi Tsuchiya will be in charge of the No. 16 car this year for the 2026 season. We look forward to seeing the tactics of the manager, who is returning to the director's role after a long absence.

The drivers are Tomoki Nojiri and Ren Sato, who have moved from car No. 8. This is an exciting combination that seems likely to consistently aim for the top spot in qualifying. Please keep an eye on the performance of these two drivers this season.

In the morning free practice, they were 3rd, indicating that the car is progressing without any issues.



Tomoki Nojiri took the lead in Q1. Nojiri recorded the fastest time on his attack lap, but then his teammate's car No. 8 crashed, causing a red flag interruption.

Nojiri had already set a time sufficient enough to advance through Q1. He did not need to run again after the session resumed. In the end, he advanced through Q1 in 4th place and handed the baton to Sato.

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In Q2, Sato set the fastest time during his attack, but his time was later surpassed, ultimately placing him in 6th place. He will start from the third row tomorrow, but it is a position where he can definitely aim for a podium finish. The team will fight for the podium tomorrow.



Comments from Team Manager Keiichi Tsuchiya:

This will be our first race with the Prelude, but I believe we had a better start since the winter tests compared to the last year. I am relieved that the Honda teams are ahead overall. I am looking forward to seeing how far Nojiri and Ren can go. Please cheer them on.



Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:

Since both the setup we brought and form were good from the start, we had high hopes for qualifying, but our rivals have also moved up, and we could not get the position we were aiming for. However, it is not a bad position. We will do our best to get on the podium tomorrow.



Comments from Driver Tomoki Nojiri:

Q1 was chaotic with red flags and so odds, but I was able to set a good time just before the red flags came out, and the time itself was good enough for me to avoid getting caught up in the confusion and move on to Q2, which was great. The Prelude has been getting better little by little through testing, and today's long run was also good. I want to improve our performance from here and aim for a podium finish in tomorrow's race.

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Comments from Driver Ren Sato:

I was in charge of Q2 and finished 6th place overall. While the Supra teams were dominant, the Prelude teams were also able to get into the top ranks. I want to prepare a strong setup for tomorrow's race and aim for a podium finish right from the start of the season.

■ April 12th, 2026 (Sun): #16 Race Report

Though the leader is still out of sight, it was a good performance for a team even full of firsts

Last year's opening race was bothered by a rainy start and the team fell into confusion, then this year the team is hoping for a good start.

The starting driver was Tomoki Nojiri. After the formation lap, the race started. Nojiri dropped two positions by the first corner.

He remained in 8th place until lap 29 till routine pit stops began. He moved up to 7th place on lap 29 but took a pit stop on the next lap 30. Ren Sato took over the second half of the race.



After the pit-stop, he quickly regained his position and continued running in 8th place.

With teammate's car No. 8 also pitting, he moved up to 7th place on lap 43. Sato's pace was fast after that, and he moved up to 6th place on lap 48.

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Sato maintained a steady pace until the final stages, but then he requested to increase his pace via radio, and he did so from then onward.

He was 10 seconds behind the car in front and could not quite catch up to it, but he managed to secure 6th place and gain points.



Comments from Team Manager Keiichi Tsuchiya:

We somehow were able to finish in 6th place. We were the top finishers among the Hondas but still cannot see the back of the top yet. We would like to prepare to be able to compete for the lead at the next race in Fuji.



Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:

Our pace was good, and I believe both drivers drove well. They also drove fuel efficiently, placing us at the top of the Prelude lineup. Our strategy and pace were also good. We will aim for even higher-ranking next time.



Comments from Driver Tomoki Nojiri:

I was aiming for the podium, so this result is disappointing, but I am confident that we were able to perform well in our first race, both for the Prelude and for our team. To improve for the next race, we will prepare thoroughly.

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Comments from Driver Ren Sato:

I dropped positions in the first stint, but I was able to move forward effectively through strategy. With help of the car being in good condition, I was able to maintain a good pace. We could not reach the top, but I believe there is still a lot of room for improvement, and I am glad we finished at the top among the Hondas anyhow. We will prepare thoroughly for the next race.

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