ARTA

11/09/2026

ARTA Race Report

Round 3 MOTEGI

■November 7, 2026 (Sat): #8 Qualifying and Race Report

From 13th on the grid to second, and fourth at the finish.
Victory is the goal in the final round!

Round 3 in Malaysia was postponed following its cancellation, and the replacement race was scheduled for Saturday here at Motegi. It was a tight schedule, with qualifying in the morning and the race in the afternoon.

Although this event was designated Round 3, it was the seventh race of the season, so qualifying and the race were held with half success weight. Sunday's final round would be run with no success weight.

Qualifying was not held in the usual knockout format; instead, a single driver set the qualifying time.

Kakunoshin Ohta took charge of qualifying. Although the team had gained solid confidence in free practice, setup changes aimed at producing an exceptionally quick qualifying lap backfired, leaving the car a disappointing 13th.



However, the car set the third-fastest time in the pre-race warm-up, raising expectations of a comeback in the race. Hiroki Otsu started the race.

The start itself was reasonable, but Otsu lost a position before the end of the opening lap. Contact among GT300 cars behind brought out an FCY at the start of lap 2, which was soon converted to a Safety Car. Debris removal took time, and the race restarted on lap 8. Otsu initially struggled to raise his pace, but from lap 15 he used GT300 traffic to move up to 13th.

Cars began making their routine pit stops on lap 18, allowing the No. 8 car to rise to fourth by lap 21. As more rivals stopped, it took the lead by lap 23.

After every car except the No. 8 had pitted, Otsu stayed out to build a margin, setting quick laps and extending the gap. He made the routine stop on lap 35 and handed over to Kakunoshin Ohta. Only the left-front tire was changed before the car rejoined.



Ohta returned in fourth and immediately showed strong pace, moving to third on lap 40 and second on lap 41. Heavy rear-tire wear then allowed the car behind to close in. He dropped to third on lap 50 and, after damaging the tires in the fight for second, lost another position on lap 51 while managing vibration. He finished fourth, having climbed from 13th to as high as second and delivered an outstanding performance. The podium was just out of reach, but the team will target victory tomorrow.

* Following post-race scrutineering, a car was disqualified and the No. 8 was provisionally promoted to third. The official result had not been issued at the time of writing.



Comments from Team Manager Aguri Suzuki:
“We made a mistake in qualifying and started 13th, but at one point we climbed all the way to second, so I think the race itself was very good. We took a gamble by changing only the left-front tire, and that had a major effect. The rear tires were difficult near the end, but starting near the back and finishing there would have achieved nothing, so we had to gamble. We gained many positions, so I believe it was the right strategy. Second place was within reach, but the tires did not quite last. Even so, it was a race that gives us momentum for tomorrow.”



Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:
“We were strong in free practice, but the setup change we made to challenge for the top position missed the mark. That prevented the tires from warming up properly, and I feel sorry for the drivers. In the race the car did not initially have the performance Otsu needed to overtake, but once the cars ahead had pitted he could run in clear air and his pace was very good. His tire management was also excellent, so we changed our plan and extended the stint. Based on the gap behind, our choices were no tire change or only the left-front. We chose the latter and sent Ohta back out in a good position. He drove hard, but the strategy was demanding and the tires did not last to the end. Considering where we started, however, I think it was a good race.”



Comments from Driver Kakunoshin Ohta:
“Finishing fourth after starting 13th made this a good race. We were able to fight hard in the second half, and I hope the fans enjoyed it as much as we did. Otsu's pace and tire management in the first half were excellent, and the team made the right decisions. Tomorrow I want to win and finish the year on a high. Thank you for your support.”



Comments from Driver Hiroki Otsu:
“We finished fourth, and from 13th on the grid that is not a bad result. I drove cautiously early on while considering the tire strategy, but my pace improved in the second half of my stint and the strategy worked well. Ohta also had strong pace and at one point moved up to second. We can use this experience in tomorrow's race, so we will prepare carefully.”

*The contents of this race report and all accompanying photos were provided by ARTA.

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ARTA Race Report

Round 3 MOTEGI

■November 7, 2026 (Sat): #16 Qualifying and Race Report

Second in qualifying, but unable to match the tires to the track temperature and ninth in the race. Victory is the goal in the final round!

This replacement race for Round 3 was held with half success weight. Although a mathematical chance of the championship remained, the 26-point gap to the leader made a reversal extremely difficult. The team therefore focused solely on winning. Since victory at Suzuka, the car's balance had been excellent, and the aim was to deliver results in both races this weekend and end the season strongly.

The car was second fastest in free practice and again qualified second. It was also second in the warm-up, further raising expectations for the race.



After two formation laps, the race began. Starting driver Tomoki Nojiri made a clean getaway, but contact among GT300 cars behind brought out an FCY on lap 2. With debris and track cleanup expected to take time, the FCY was converted to a Safety Car. The cleanup took as long as expected, and the race restarted on lap 8.

Nojiri started well but could not pass the car ahead. GT300 traffic appeared from lap 15, and he struggled to build pace, losing two positions by lap 17. He made the routine pit stop on lap 19 and

handed over to Ren Sato.



After rejoining, Sato fought intensely for seventh but held eighth. He maintained that position through lap 40 before dropping to ninth on lap 41. Although his pace was good, he could not regain a position and finished ninth.

Sato struggled because the car lacked speed in medium- and high-speed sections. The cause was still under investigation, but the team decided to change the engine for tomorrow's race despite the expected grid penalty. Everyone will give their all to end the season on a high.

* Following post-race scrutineering, a car was disqualified and the No. 16 was provisionally promoted to eighth. The official result had not been issued at the time of writing.



Comments from Team Manager Keiichi Tsuchiya:
“We had been near the front in free practice, qualifying and the warm-up, so I thought we had a reasonable chance. However, I do not think we matched the tires properly to the track temperature. I feel sorry for the drivers. We will identify and improve the problem areas tomorrow so that we can finish the season with a result to celebrate.”



Comments from Team Director Hirokatsu Tanaka:
“We missed pole, but we were the highest-placed Bridgestone user, so expectations were high for the race. The race setup lacked speed, and the pit stop also took slightly longer than planned. We were aiming to win and I am sorry that we could not meet everyone's expectations. We have another race tomorrow, and we will prepare to deliver a result.”



Comments from Driver Tomoki Nojiri:
“I put together a good qualifying lap and secured second. Once the race began, however, the balance was not right and I could not produce a performance I was satisfied with during my stint or hand the car to Ren in the position I wanted. We have another race tomorrow, and I will do my best to make amends.”



Comments from Driver Ren Sato:
“I struggled with tire management and could not raise the pace, so we ultimately finished ninth. Other Honda cars gained positions, and considering where we started, I feel there was more we could have done. We will analyze everything carefully and prepare for tomorrow. Thank you for your continued support.”

*The contents of this race report and all accompanying photos were provided by ARTA.