

Le Mans, France, Sunday 20th May, 2007

KONICA MINOLTA Honda unlucky at wet Le Mans

KONICA MINOLTA Honda were unlucky not to get a good result at a dramatic French GP today. With changeable weather conditions turning into a full wet race, it was a gamble for many riders what to do in such difficult conditions. During the 28-lap race, Shinya Nakano was catching a group of riders in front of him when he crashed his Honda RC212V machine with just eight laps to go. The Team had chosen the same tactics as winner Chris Vermeulen (Suzuki), which meant they could have finished high up in the top 10. Despite the crash, the Team are up-beat about Shinya's performance and their prospects for the next race at Mugello in two weeks time.

Gianluca Montiron – Team Manager KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"This was an exciting race in these conditions. In the first few laps on slicks you could see that many riders had problems and were sliding a lot. I must say congratulations to the Team for choosing the best tactics and the perfect time for bringing Shinya into the pits for the wet set-up bike. Shinya-san was doing well and catching the three riders in front of him and he was pushing hard. Yes he crashed, but this can happen so easily in such conditions and at least we showed a lot of potential. We will not give up and we will be present at next the Grand Prix in Mugello where we will get the results that we deserve."

Shinya Nakano – Rider, KONICA MINOLTA Honda (DNF)

"In the early part of the race it was difficult as the rain was starting to fall making it difficult to ride fast with the slick tyre, then I was hoping for more rain! When the rain really came down the Team did a great job of getting me into the pits at the right time. Our pace was pretty good and I was overtaking a few riders, and then I was trying to catch the guys in front of me. I could see them, so maybe that meant I pushed too much. Eventually I lost the front going into one of the chicanes and I went down. I'm so unhappy for the Team as they did everything correctly, but it was a good experience to be going fast on the Michelin rain tyres and I had a good feeling with the bike. At the end of the day this sort of race is always a bit of a gamble. We shall give 110% for the next race at Mugello."

Giulio Bernardelle – Technical Director, KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"We are satisfied in some respects with today as our strategy was the same as the race winner. Shinya's feeling with the bike was not the same as the wet test in Jerez but this was because the conditions were continually changing during race. Shinya was going well in the full wet conditions and had overtaken Loris Capirossi and was only two seconds behind Alex Barros in front. Ahead of Alex was John Hopkins and Shinya was going a full two seconds faster than him, so we could have maybe battled for seventh or higher. But, anything can happen in these conditions and sadly Shinya crashed at one of the chicanes. We can be happy that our tyre choice was correct and that we have seen some improvement over the weekend. Now at the next few races we need some better results."

GP of France – Race results

1) Chris Vermeulen	Suzuki	50' 58.713"
2) Marco Melandri	Honda	51' 11.312"
3) Casey Stoner	Ducati	51' 26.060"
4) Dani Pedrosa	Honda	51' 36.041"
5) Alex Hoffman	Ducati	51' 47.879"
Shinya Nakano	Honda	DNF

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