

Assen, The Netherlands, Saturday 30th June 2007

KONICA MINOLTA Honda bounces back in last-half of Assen thriller

Despite a poor start to today's Dutch TT race, KONICA MINOLTA Honda's Shinya Nakano battled back from outside the points to take 12th at the flag and net some valuable points in the MotoGP World Championship. The 29-year-old Japanese rider battled with grip problems in the early part of the race, before slowly picking his way through the field to get safely into the points. At the front the crowd were treated to a thrilling last few laps as Valentino Rossi closed on championship leader Casey Stoner, before passing the Australian and taking the win. Assen marks the half-way point in the series and there will now be a two-week break before the MotoGP circus heads to Germany and the Sachsenring on 15th July.

Gianluca Montiron – Team Manager KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"Shinya's start wasn't so good and he spent a few laps getting a good feeling with the machine. I think if we would have made a better start then we could have been battling with the third group of Melandri and Checa who were inside the top ten. Last year Shinya was second at Assen, which is one of his favourite tracks, so I don't think Shinya can lose the ability to ride around this circuit, but what it does show is that we are in a transitory period while improvements to our technical package come on-line. I want to say thank you to our Technical Partners and Sponsors such as KONICA MINOLTA as they have been patient while we do our best to deal with our current situation. At the moment we cannot fulfil their expectations but this is the situation we have to deal with. On a positive note the factory Hondas did well and we have seen an improvement in our own performance from the last race. Now we have to look forward to the last half of the season and hope that satellite teams will obtain something to change our current performance situation."

Shinya Nakano – Rider, KONICA MINOLTA Honda (12th position)

"We had a difficult start to the race as I couldn't get a good rhythm, maybe because I chose a harder tyre than usual. But this meant that towards the end of the race I had a good pace I could catch the group in front of me. The result is still a little disappointing, as I could see the group ahead, and we're still missing some corner speed and confidence in the front-end, but it has been the same the whole weekend. It was good to see Honda improve at the front and this must be good news for us in the long run and in the second half of the championship."

Giulio Bernardelle – Technical Director, KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"At least the track conditions were the best of the whole weekend! Our average lap time was not so bad especially in the last part of the race. Shinya explained that the tyre needed a lot of time to warm up to have best grip, so it was necessary to do a lot of laps, which meant that Shinya was not so strong in first part of the race. The big positive point is that we were consistent this time, although we would have preferred a quicker lap time. It was good to see a Honda on the podium so hopefully improvements will work their way down to our Team and the other satellite Honda squads. Until then we will continue to work 100% with the package that we have and work with Michelin to improve our overall performance."

Assen TT - Race results

1) Valentino Rossi	Yamaha	42' 37.149"
2) Casey Stoner	Ducati	42' 39.058"
3) Nicky Hayden	Honda	42' 43.226"
4) Dani Pedrosa	Honda	42' 47.614"
5) John Hopkins	Suzuki	42' 50.287"
12) Shinya Nakano	Honda	43' 25.045"

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