

Estoril, Portugal, Sunday 16th September 2007

Poor start hampers KONICA MINOLTA Honda at Estoril

The KONICA MINOLTA Honda Team finished today's Portuguese Grand Prix in 11th position after suffering a bad start to the 28-lap race. With high hopes after increased performance from the Honda RC212V and Michelin tyres had been found, bad-luck saw Shinya Nakano drop to 17th place with 21 laps of the race still to go. During the race, the battle for position between 9th and 15th was close and as hard-fought as that at the front, with only a few seconds covering six riders. Shinya was able to overtake a number of riders and take advantage of some retirements to finish just outside the top 10 in 11th place. The championship now moves on to Japan and the Twin Ring Motegi circuit as the season enters its final phase with the three 'fly-away' rounds of Japan, Australia and Malaysia.

Gianluca Montiron – Team Manager KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"I think today we could see that Michelin have worked hard and Michelin riders possibly had some advantage. We were all hoping that Shinya could profit from this, but he didn't have a very good start he slipped down the order and from there it was always going to be difficult to come back and get back with the group in front. At the front it was a very exciting and enjoyable race, but from our perspective it was a mediocre race as after practice we could see we had made a significant step forward and we all expected a better result. I think perhaps Shinya lost a little confidence after his practice crash, as before this he was doing well. Looking at things positively, we immediately go to Japan and we know that our technical package works better than before, so now we shall see if Shinya will gain some confidence in the bike and get a good result at his home grand prix."

Shinya Nakano – Rider, KONICA MINOLTA Honda (10th)

"In one of the fast corners there were so many riders together and I was on the inside but got pushed back and I lost some places. We also had a small problem with the engine, which disappeared when I started using a gear higher and by the middle of the race I could start to push harder and begin to overtake a few riders and enjoy the race. Our settings are an improvement over earlier in the season, so the positive we take from Estoril is that the Team and I have found a good direction. Thankfully we have only one week to wait before the Japanese GP, and I trust the Team and myself to get a good result."

Giulio Bernardelle – Technical Director, KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"Our start wasn't so good and also I think our problem was that we had reduced engine performance for a while, perhaps the engine temperature had increased, we think that this is the main reason why Shinya was not able to recreate some of the lap-times he was doing in practice. It is a shame as the track conditions were very good, similar to qualifying so our potential was looking good, but we were unlucky once more. I think our tyre choice was correct, we stayed on the medium-hard tyre for the rear, perhaps we would have liked a little more front-end grip, but our tyres were pretty good overall. Shinya tried to stay with the riders in front of him, but he was unable to attack as he didn't have sufficient acceleration to catch and pass them."

Portugal GP - Race results

1) Valentino Rossi	Yamaha	45' 49.911"
2) Dani Pedrosa	Honda	45' 50.086"
3) Casey Stoner	Ducati	45' 51.388"
4) Nicky Hayden	Honda	46' 02.862"
5) Marco Melandri	Honda	46' 07.254"
11) Shinya Nakano	Honda	46' 35.314"

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