

Twin Ring Motegi, Japan, Sunday 23rd September 2007

KONICA MINOLTA Honda out of the points at home in Japan

It proved to be a tough home race for Shinya Nakano and the KONICA MINOLTA Honda Team at today's Japanese Grand Prix. With rain arriving in time for the morning warm-up, Shinya was 11th fastest as he and the Team made set-up preparations for a wet start to this afternoon's 24-lap race. The race was declared wet, but within just a few laps conditions began to change and as the track began to dry out, it was only a matter of time before the riders had to pit to switch to their second bikes fitted with dry-weather tyres and settings. Shinya pitted his KONICA MINOLTA Honda with 12 laps to go but found that he did not have enough grip from his slick tyres in the difficult conditions and also had a vibration problem from the rear of his Honda RCV212V machine.

Gianluca Montiron – Team Manager KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"With these conditions at the beginning of the race, you can see the riders spend a little time to understand the conditions and I think we lost a little bit of time in the early laps. Within two or three laps Shinya was more consistent and he began to get into a good rhythm. When the track dries out, it's the rider who has to decide when to enter the pits to change to the dry set-up bike and I think Shinya came in at about the right time. After he went out on the bike with slicks he needed a few laps to understand the feeling and feedback from the machine, but he didn't get a good feeling from our technical package today in these difficult conditions, so this is the reason for our performance. We are all obviously disappointed as our expectations were higher as we look on this race as another 'home' Grand Prix in front of our sponsor."

Shinya Nakano – Rider, KONICA MINOLTA Honda (16th)

"I am disappointed that my home Grand Prix has ended this way. The race started full wet, but it was soon beginning to dry and I saw some riders pitting. I was going to pit, but the Michelin wet tyres were working well in the drying conditions. I maybe could have pitted a couple of laps earlier, but when I eventually changed bikes there were still some damp parts of the track and I couldn't push hard. I found it hard to get feedback from the harder compound slick tyres, which made it a difficult race for me. It's hard to accept a result like this at my home GP, but I now have to look forward to the final three races."

Giulio Bernardelle – Technical Director, KONICA MINOLTA Honda

"This has been a very difficult race for us. In the wet morning warm-up our situation wasn't so bad as Michelin gave us a new family of wet-weather tyres to try and they were good, so if the race was in full-wet conditions we could have had a good race. By the time Shinya had gone out on the dry set-up machine he felt that the grip levels weren't there so his lap-times were not high enough to battle with the other riders. We can see that when conditions aren't either fully wet or fully dry and when the temperature isn't constant we have problems with the grip levels. Shinya also had some sort of vibration problem from the rear of the machine, we do not know yet what it was but perhaps it was related to the level of grip in the corners."

GP of Japan - Race results

1) Loris Capirossi	Ducati	47' 05.484"
2) Randy de Puniet	Kawasaki	47' 16.337"
3) Toni Elias	Honda	47' 17.100"
4) Sylvain Guintoli	Yamaha	47' 17.676"
5) Marco Melandri	Honda	47' 34.053"
16) Shinya Nakano	Honda	48' 38.463"

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