



Qualifying Report

2018/9/8 Rd-6 OKAYAMA International Circuit

Weather : Rainy/Cloudy Temperature : 22°C 19 cars

2018 season is now in its final stage with two rounds left. Okayama round was held in May annually, but this year it is held as Rd6 in the final stage. Also this year, it uses 1-race format of 250km instead of 2-race format last year. This will change each team's strategy significantly.

QF started in the rain. During Knock-out QF1, the rain stopped temporarily, however, the surface was completely wet. As soon as the both drivers started to attack for the first time at the beginning, two cars went out of track and the red flag condition was thrown. It restarted with 7min30sec remaining. They attacked again with new tires. Even though Nojiri needed to change car balance a little, he finished in 5th position. Matsushita was in 8th and they moved on to QF2.

In following QF2, Nojiri felt better after changing car balance, and made it through QF3 in 3rd place. Matsushita lost his balance in Sec1 and lost time. He finished QF in 12th. Finally in QF3, Nojiri recorded the best time in Sec1, and the second fastest lap for a moment. Then, he was passed by other drivers speeding up, and finished in 4th place.

#5: Tomoyuki Nojiri Position 4th (QF1 5th, QF2 3rd, QF3 4th) 1st among Honda users

From Free Practice in the morning, I had a good feeling about my car with stability-importance set-up. Still, in QF1, car balance was not good enough, but after adjusting a little, I was confident of competing for the pole position. Too bad I couldn't meet the times of top two. However, under the wet surface condition changing rapidly, I am glad I secured the second row. Tomorrow, the weather will be unstable and there will be a heavy rain, thus the race will be messy. I will stay calm to drive through the end so that I will finish on the podium.

#6: Nobuharu Matsushita Position 12th (QF1 8th, QF2 12th) 4th among HONDA users

It was my first drive at OKAYAMA International Circuit. The more I drove, the more I learned about the course. My attack in QF1 was good, but in QF2, I couldn't shorten my time as much as competitors did, and I felt it was my driving, not the set-up, to be fixed. I ended up in 12th position, and will start from behind. However, I believe there will be another chance tomorrow, especially in the rain, so I will concentrate to finish in the top group.