

2009 Suzuka/Kinki regional Championship round 5, Suzuka 4hrs Endurance Road Race. MORIWAKI CLUB Race Report

ST600 Class #19 S.fijisima/K.Tabaru Qualifying: 3rd/Race: WIN
Qualifying #1rider K.Tabaru: 2 min20sec991 / #2rider S.Fujisima: 2 min19sec746 /
Merged qualify 4 min 40sec737 / Fastest: 2 min 20sec102

MORIWAKI ENGINEERING and MORIWAKI RACING have suspended domestic race activities since the beginning of this year due to other projects in the company. However, We continued to support MORIWAKI Club members to enter the Suzuka 4hrs which is considered as a fostering race for those future riders.

Last year's pole position rider, Fujishima and a new young rider, Tabaru teamed up for the race. Relatively less career riders gather this endurance race and there are always accidents. Shogo Moriwaki, MORIWAKI ENGINEERING's development rider led these 2 to the difficult challenge.

The qualifying session was held on Friday during the Suzuka 8hrs week. Second rider goes first, then first rider takes his turn later. The second rider, Fujishima lapped 2min19.746sec, the 2nd fastest in the group. The first rider, Tabaru was 5th in his group, 2min20.991sec. Total of those 2 decides the grid. They got 3rd position of the grid with 4min40.737sec.

The disastrous rain in the far western Japan earlier in the week made people worry about the weather, but the overcast sky showed no sign of rain. Clouds started parting and the race started on Saturday afternoon under the shining sun.

Le Mans 24hrs style starting; Fujishima dashed to the bike, started smoothly and got into the 1st corner before all his opponents.

Fujishima kept the top position, riding constantly with steady 2min20secs. It was ideal beginning. #73 machine passed Fujishima at lap6 but no hastiness in his ride. Then, #10 machine was gradually catching up the top 2 and passed both riders at lap7. Fujishima completed 16laps of his first stint. Due to the new regulation, each rider must ride at least 16 laps and no more than 18 laps at each stint. MORIWAKI Club decided to change riders every after minimum required laps to minimize fatigue of riders. Other MORIWAKI Club members helped their pit work and everything went smoothly. Tabaru got top at lap 19 and kept his position until the end of the stint, gained 7 seconds lead from the runner up. Fujishima also rode steadily and came back at lap 49 completing his second stint. By the time Tabaru got back to the track, there were good 25sec gap between him and the runner-up, the #73. The #73 was lapping 2min22sens whilst Tabaru was between 2min23sec to 25sec. At lap58, the gap was 12sec. Tabaru was at the chicane trying to pass one of the back-markers from inside. He passed the rider but he couldn't get desirable line. He leaned the bike further, then lost the front end grip. Luckily, it was slow speed corner and Tabaru stuck his body under the bike and tried to minimize the damage on the bike as little as possible. Tabaru saved the bike from any major damage and lifted it up, started the engine and went back on track. He was passed by #73 but only 5sec behind. There was another crash at the chicane. It was #73, so Tabaru got back to the top and finished the stint at lap 65 and switched to Fujishima.

During the Fujishima's stint, then runner-up rider crashed and giving Fujishima 32sec lead. Fujishima kept 2min23sec pace. His lead became 1min50sec when his closest opponent made their routine pit-in. Fujishima came back at lap 81, refill the gas and changed to Tabaru. Tabaru was lapping 2min26 to 27sec, taking care of the machine. He finished his last stint without any trouble at lap 97 and gave the machine to Fujishima. Less than 10minutes to 4hours, Fujishima carefully rode the last remaining time and it reached 4hrs when he was going through the DUNLOP corner at lap99. He came back to the main straight and crossed the checker line.



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Fujishima's comment:

Until I crossed the checker line, I was focusing on the race and did everything I could. I tried to keep my own pace so I wasn't really worrying when I was passed at earlier of the race. I only tried to do whatever I faced. I must have been relieved when I finished the race because I was crying as I was coming back the pit road. It's all because my sponsors, supporters and team members, I could win the race. Thank you all very much.

Tabaru's comment:

In the moment I crashed, I really regretted what I have done, but I quickly thought that I have to keep the bike from damages. I stuck my body under the bike. Luckily the bike was okay and I went back to the race and determined to focus on the race. It was my first 4hrs and very happy with the result. I would like to thank everyone supported me to win the race.

Shogo Moriwaki's comment:

Last year, MORIWAKI Club didn't achieve much and was losing objectives. So, we dissolved the club. Then, we regroup the club with former members who really determined to go forward. I made their training menu every day and everyone followed it. In my menu, addition to usual physical and mental training, there were trainings based on brain science. I also used data from data logger to teach riders the condition of the machines when they are running in order to think what action should be taken at each situation. I think we saw some of the result of my training menu in the race. There are many uncertainties during endurance races so each rider should only try to do the best in their ability limit. I focused on supporting them so they can concentrate on their riding without being bothered by whatever happening around them. The crash was within the scope of my assumption and I expected the race pace. The win will nourish my role and I will challenge further with the club members. I would like to thank those many people who supported us. We could completed the race in one piece. Thank you.

Mamoru Moriwaki, Team Manager's comment:

I watched them working hard every day. I'm glad that all those effort turned into the best result. Their machine was in good condition so it kept tires from wearing too much through the end. That was a big achievement, too. I thank to all our supporters allowing the team to achieve the great success. And I congratulate Fujishima and Tabaru for their endeavor.

