

Honda and Idemitsu Hold 10th Anniversary Event of Rider Development Project at Grand Prix of Japan

Motegi, Japan, September 25 - To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the rider development program conducted by Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (Director, President and Representative Executive Officer: Toshihiro Mibe) and Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd. (Idemitsu, Representative Director President and Chief Executive Officer: Shunichi Kito) aimed at “discovering and nurturing world class Asian riders, and developing motorsports culture in Asia,” the companies held a ceremony at Mobility Resort Motegi, where the 2022 FIM* MotoGP World Championship Round 16, the Grand Prix of Japan is being held.

* FIM: Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme



Shunichi Kito (Idemitsu) and Toshihiro Mibe (Honda)



Members involved in the rider development program

The rider development program by Honda and Idemitsu began in 2013 with the IDEMITSU Honda Team Asia's entry into the Moto2 World Championship. In 2016, Honda Team Asia, aimed at providing a path to Moto2, began racing in the Moto3 class. The following year, the Dorna Sports SL.-organized Idemitsu Asia Talent Cup kicked off, aiming to produce world-class riders. In 2018, IDEMITSU Honda Team Asia rider Takaaki Nakagami moved from Moto2 to representing LCR Honda IDEMITSU in the MotoGP class, completing the rider development path to the premier class.

To celebrate the project's tenth anniversary, the companies held a ceremony on the Mobility Resort Motegi track, where the Grand Prix of Japan, home race to both companies, is held. The event was attended by LCR Honda IDEMITSU's Takaaki Nakagami, IDEMITSU Honda Team Asia's Ai Ogura and Somkiat Chantra, Honda Team Asia's Mario Suryo Aji and Taiyo Furusato, and Moto2 / Moto3 team manager Hiroshi Aoyama, along with IDEMITSU Honda Team Asia's first team manager Tadayuki Okada and Yuki Takahashi. Idemitsu's President, Shunichi Kito, Dorna Sports' CEO Carmelo Ezpeleta, and Honda's President Toshihiro Mibe expressed their renewed passion in continuing the project to develop motorsports culture in the Asia region.

**■ Shunichi Kito: Representative Director President and Chief Executive Officer,
Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd.**

“I am proud that we have been involved with Honda in developing young riders for the past ten years, and acting as technical advisor for the teams’ oil strategies. The project has many accomplishments, beginning with Yuki Takahashi participating in the Moto2 class, Takaaki Nakagami becoming the only Japanese rider to compete in the MotoGP class since 2018, and Ai Ogura and Somkiat Chantra, both former Asia Talent Cup riders, winning races in the Moto2 class. These achievements were made possible with the continuing efforts by the riders, the team managers, the teams, Honda and Dorna, and with the support of all its fans. I am grateful for all the support we have had. We will continue to fight alongside riders who aim for the pinnacle of motorsports, with high ideals and fighting spirits.”

**■ Toshihiro Mibe: Director, President and Representative Executive Officer,
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.**

“I am very pleased that our project with Idemitsu to develop young Asian riders has reached its tenth anniversary. For Honda, this project which is part of its racing activities in the Asia region to make the dreams of young riders aspiring to race in the MotoGP class come true, is very meaningful. I am truly grateful for Idemitsu’s continued support for this project. Our hope is that motorsports will gain further in popularity, through more and more Asian riders competing in the premier MotoGP class.”