

August 6, 2023

Team HRC with Japan Post Wins 44th Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race - Honda Dominates Podium for the First Time Since 2010 -

MIE, Japan, August 6, 2023 - Honda factory team*¹ Team HRC with Japan Post (CBR1000RR-R FIREBLADE SP: Takumi Takahashi / Tetsuta Nagashima / Xavi Vierge) has won the 2023 FIM*² Endurance World Championship “Coca-Cola” Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race 44th Tournament (Suzuka 8 Hours) held at the Suzuka Circuit in Mie, on Sunday, August 6.

For the first time since the 33rd Suzuka 8 Hours in 2010, Honda dominated the podium with TOHO Racing (Ryuichi Kiyonari / Takuma Kunimine / Ikuhiro Enokido) *³ finishing second and SDG Honda Racing (Teppei Nagoe / Naomichi Uramoto / Haruki Noguchi) third. In addition, EWC team F.C.C. TSR Honda France (Mike Di Meglio / Alan Techer / Tarran Mackenzie) finished fourth, giving Honda the top four spots.

*1 Factory team: Racing team managed by the bike manufacturer

*2 FIM: Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme

*3 On August 8, 2023, the FIM disqualified TOHO Racing for a technical infringement, moving up results by one place for all teams other than Team HRC with Japan Post.



Suzuka 8 hours podium



CBR1000RR-R FIREBLADE SP

Team HRC with Japan Post’s Tetsuta Nagashima set the fastest lap time of 2 min 5.722s during the two qualifying sessions on August 4 (Fri) and 5 (Sat). The team’s average lap time was second overall, allowing the Honda factory team to proceed to the Top 10 Trial. In the Top 10 Trial that began at 4:00 pm on August 5 (Sat), Tetsuta Nagashima and Xavi Vierge represented the team. Nagashima once again set the fastest lap, 2 min 5.329s, giving Honda its second consecutive Suzuka 8 Hours pole position.

The race started at 11:30 am on August 6 (Sun). Although the team’s starting rider Takumi Takahashi initially lost the lead, once back on top he gradually extended the gap to the second-place rider. In the following stints, both Tetsuta Nagashima and Xavi Vierge kept consistent, fast paces to extend the lead even further, lapping all other teams. At 7:30 pm, Team HRC with Japan Post crossed the finish line completing 216 laps, giving Honda its second consecutive Suzuka 8 Hours pole-to-win.

This win marks Honda's second consecutive and 29th overall Suzuka 8 Hours victory. For Takahashi, his fifth win ties him with the all-time record for Suzuka 8 Hours victories for a rider. Nagashima has earned his second consecutive Suzuka 8 Hours title, while Vierge has won his debut race at the event.

■ Takumi Takahashi | Team HRC with Japan Post

"I'm relieved we won. It started to rain in my final stint, so I thought fate was against us. My lap times were very slow, but I had to stay upright, so I avoided taking any risks. Tetsuta and Xavi both had great pace, which led to our victory. I'm grateful to everyone in the team. I also managed to equal the most Suzuka 8 Hours wins for a rider. I had many chances up to now but failed, so if I have the chance in the future, I'd like to extend my record."

■ Tetsuta Nagashima | Team HRC with Japan Post

"I really didn't know if I could race in the Suzuka 8 Hours this year because of my injury. I was also worried that I would not be fast enough. Without the speed, I would not be selected, and if I was selected, I had to win. There was a lot of pressure, so I'm relieved we won. Last year's Suzuka 8 Hours was the first time for me so everything was new, and I relied on Takumi a lot and just rode as fast as I could, but this year I'm a bit more mature, and managed to pace myself in the last stint, which I think helped in winning. I'm grateful to everyone at HRC for giving me this opportunity."

■ Xavi Vierge | Team HRC with Japan Post

"Being able to race in the Suzuka 8 Hours was the best experience. It was my first time, but I had the best teammates, and learned a lot. The safety car came out during my stint, and I didn't know what to do because I didn't have the experience. But I rode carefully, because I could not fail. Takumi and Tetsuta both had tough stints in the rain. I believe we could overcome these difficulties because we worked as a team. I'm grateful for the team's support as well. I'll gladly come back to Suzuka as many times as I can to have this amazing experience again!"

■ Koji Watanabe, President of Honda Racing Corporation

"First, I would like to congratulate the three Team HRC with Japan Post riders, team staff and everyone involved. I am very proud of everyone overcoming the pressure of defending the Suzuka 8 Hours title to win again. I would like to thank Japan Post Co., Ltd. and all our other sponsors who supported our efforts. HRC will continue to meet the expectations of motorsports fans and Honda fans, aiming even higher than before. I look forward to everyone's support."