

November 20, 2023

### **Honda and MIE Honda HEAT Hold Rally Event Toward the Start of the NTT JAPAN RUGBY LEAGUE ONE 2023-24 Season**

TOKYO, Japan, November 20, 2023 – Honda Motor Co., Ltd. today held rally event at the Aoyama Welcome Plaza within the Honda Global Head Office in Tokyo, ahead of the NTT Japan Rugby League One 2023-2024 season, which begins on Saturday, December 9, 2023.

At the event, Manabu Ozawa, a Managing Executive Officer of Honda, introduced Honda's approach to sports activities, which is based on its desire to become the “power” that supports people who take on challenges through sports. Then, Kieran Crowley, who begins his first season as the new head coach of the MIE Honda HEAT, explained his vision for an innovative team building approach, including recruiting of new players and coaches.

Other members who shared their passionate feeling and commitment for this season at the event included the team's General Manager Yoshihito Maeda, the captain Ryo Furuta and other key players, including Franco Mostert, who contributed to the South Africa national team's victory in the recently concluded 2023 Rugby World Cup, and up-and-coming players such as Viliami Afu Kaipouli.



The MIE Honda HEAT was founded in 1961 as Honda's rugby team based in the City of Suzuka, in Mie Prefecture, Japan. As a result of finishing last season in second place in Division 2 and winning the Division 2 Placement Match, this season, the team will start taking on challenges to compete in Division 1, the top division of the league. With a goal to finish this season as one of the top 8 teams, the MIE Honda HEAT will continue strengthening the team and strive to become the No. 1 team in Japan in four years' time.

Based on the vision for its sports activities – “To increase the number of people who take on challenges through sports activities and make the lives of all people more enjoyable” – Honda has been and will continue to support various athletes who take on challenges toward the realization of their own dreams.

■ **Comment of Manabu Ozawa, Managing Executive Officer of Honda Motor Co., Ltd.**

“Since we announced the direction and vision of Honda corporate sports activities last year, all of our sports teams, such as the Honda Track & Field Team, have been demonstrating outstanding performances, including the expansion of their challenges from Japan to various countries outside Japan, and inspiring many people around the world.

As for our rugby team, many people become fascinated by the game of rugby because of the spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice, the respect for everyone involved and the trust the players have in the team and themselves that comes from the overwhelming effort they put in. I believe such fascination moves the hearts of so many people, and that is the very essence of the Honda Global Brand Slogan – The Power of Dreams - How we move you. This season, MIE Honda HEAT welcomed Kieran Crowley as the head coach, a legendary coach who continues to excel on the world stage, under whom the team will gear up for further advancement. At Honda, we believe that ‘The Power of Dreams’ is limitless, and such power will move people physically and move people’s hearts. Through our sports activities, Honda will continue to be the ‘power’ that supports people who take on challenges. Thank you in advance for your support and cheers for the MIE Honda HEAT!”

■ **Comment of Kieran Crowley, Head Coach of MIE Honda HEAT**

“Our goal to ‘become the No.1 team in Japan in four years’ is the dream of all players and staff members of MIE Honda HEAT, and when our dream comes true, we can be the team that embodies our team vision – the strongest, the most beloved and most respected team – in the truest sense. As a part of team building initiatives, the whole team came together and set a slogan of ‘HEAT Way – Powered by Effort –.’ This slogan represents our renewed determination to work toward the high goal while uniting our passion and giving our full effort to take on challenges. Please keep your expectations high for the success of MIE Honda HEAT!”

MIE Honda HEAT official website: <http://www.honda-heat.jp/> (Japanese)  
<http://www.honda-heat.jp/en/> (English)

Honda Sports Activity website: <https://global.honda.jp/brand/sports/> (Japanese)

JAPAN RUGBY LEAGUE ONE: <https://league-one.jp/> (Japanese)  
<https://league-one.jp/en/> (English)