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Honda to Rename Rugby Team “TOCHIGI Honda HEAT” to Coincide with the Team’s New Base of Operation — Team also renews its visual identity (VI), including the team emblem —

TOKYO, Japan, June 18, 2026 – Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (Honda) today held a press conference in Utsunomiya City, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, to announce plans to rename its rugby team from MIE Honda HEAT to TOCHIGI Honda HEAT, starting with the 2026-2027 season. The team will also refresh its visual identity (VI), including the team emblem, logos and mascot. The team will begin using the new name and VI on July 1, 2026.

These changes represent the start of a new chapter for the team, which will relocate its base of operation to Utsunomiya City, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, in September 2026. The team is also renewing its determination to carry forward its history and spirit fostered over the past 65 years in Suzuka, Mie Prefecture, and create new value and inspire more people, together with the fans and people of Tochigi Prefecture.



The design of the new team emblem expresses how the passion and dreams of the community, fans, players, and team staff come together to generate a powerful “HEAT.” It also reflects the team’s commitment, under the team value — “BIND” All Dreams — to take on challenges toward its dreams while harnessing strong team unity. The team mascot, “HEAT-KUN,” will carry over the essence of the long beloved existing mascot, while being redesigned into a more expressive and energetic character with the aim of becoming beloved by people across all generations.



New team emblem



New logo



Team mascot (HEAT-KUN)

At the press conference, General Manager Kohei Ohashi and key players including Katsuyuki Hoshino, who has been selected for the JAPAN XV*, reported on the team's initiatives toward the relocation to Utsunomiya, as well as the results of the games the team hosted at the Honda HEAT Green Stadium in Utsunomiya during the 2025–2026 season in advance of the relocation. In addition, Creative Director Satoshi Kanamori explained the vision behind the new VI and the future direction of team activities.

As a Tochigi-based team, the TOCHIGI Honda HEAT will further pursue its sports-based community engagement/contribution activities, including 1) the popularization of rugby and the development of future talent, 2) the program in which players visit elementary schools to share the importance of having dreams and taking on challenges, and 3) participation in local community events.

Moreover, a new clubhouse and training facilities are scheduled for completion in the Yuinomori neighborhood of Utsunomiya by the end of August 2026. These facilities will serve not only as the team's base of operations, but as a hub for community interaction and rugby promotion activities, to build a team deeply rooted in the local community.

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

* JAPAN XV (fifteen) is the second-tier national rugby team for Japan, organized by the Japan Rugby Football Union and sits just below the Japan National Team (the “Brave Blossoms”).

■ Comments by Kohei Ohashi, General Manager of TOCHIGI Honda HEAT

“From the 2026–27 season, our team will begin a new chapter as the TOCHIGI Honda HEAT. With deep gratitude to everyone who supported us in Suzuka, Mie, we will strive for continued growth and further leap forward in our new home, Tochigi. We will continue to take on challenges as one united team to advance to the playoffs and become the No. 1 team in Japan.”

- MIE Honda HEAT official website: <https://www.honda-heat.jp/>
- About Honda sports activities: <https://global.honda/en/sports/> (English)
- Japan Rugby League ONE official website: <https://league-one.jp/en/> (English)