



Race Report



GT3 ASIA
Round-5&6 Fuji Speedway
(July 16-17, 2011)





Acquired points by being classified 5th in a row at Fuji Round of GT3 ASIA

Hitotsuyama Racing was classified 5th in a row in both 5th and 6th rounds of GT3 ASIA, which were held at Fuji Speedway on 16th – 17th of July.

In the morning of July 16th, in the intense heat under the mid-summer sun, the qualifying sessions for GT3 ASIA were conducted with 2 sessions of 15 minutes each with 10-minute interval. “The gentleman driver” Kenji Kobayashi, who took the steering wheel of Audi R8 LMS this time, have been acquiring the experience with machines and races such as Porsche Carrera Cup Japan, and he showed his high adaptability with Audi R8 LMS as well. He qualified 3rd in the 1st qualifying session and 2nd in the 2nd qualifying session. After that, Porsche 997 GT3R, which was qualified second in the 1st qualifying, was penalized, and as a result we could start from the second for both 5th and 6th rounds, which raised the morale of the team toward the race.

At 15:40, still scorching hot, the race started with the rolling start with the signal turning to green after one formation lap. Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS lost two positions at the start but cleared the first corner safely in the 4th position. Having Lamborghini Gallardo as a leader, brand-new GT3 machines Ferrari 458, Porsche 997, Audi R8 and Ford GT fought the tail-to-nose, side-by-side close competition for more than 10 laps, and the spectators got excited with this. According to the regulation of GT3 ASIA, the cars must pit-in during the time from 15 minutes to 25 minutes from the race start (the cars must pass through the pit lane from the pit entry line to the pit exit line for at least 85 seconds). Each car started its pit-in just after 15 minutes passed and completed the obligation. Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS completed his obligation of the pit-in with the right timing and went back to the track. However, the car was released approx. 3 seconds earlier than the minimum of 85-second pit-in and passed the pit exit line at 82 seconds, which caused us the Stop & Go penalty. Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS lost a lot of positions due to the penalty temporarily,

but he drove aggressively after that as well and received the checkered flag in the 5th position finally to acquire the valuable points.

The 6th round to be followed started at 12:50 on July 17th. With better acceleration, Ferrari 458 and Porsche 997 led at the start, and Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS completed the opening lap in 4th position. Under the condition with surface temperature at over 60 Celsius, the race developed with the close competition with each other with Lamborghini Gallardo as a leader like in the 5th round. Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS daringly reduced the gap to the car in front in the in-field section by utilizing the well-balanced machine and his good driving technique, but the gap became wider again due to the difference of the machine power at the straight, and the development of the race was tough. The positions stayed almost the same even after each car completed the compulsory pit stop, and Kenji Kobayashi of Audi R8 LMS finished 5th, the same position of the 5th round. We could acquire the points in a row for 2 rounds at the debut race of GT3 ASIA.

We would like to thank the fans who cheered us, Mr. Kenji Kobayashi who chose to drive with our team, and Nova Engineering that took care of the maintenance of the machine in this severe condition, for making it possible for us to appeal the presence of Audi R8 LMS at the GT3 ASIA, the stage of our new challenge.

Regarding the GT3 ASIA series, we will continue participating with Mr. Hiroshi Hamaguchi as our driver at the 7th and 8th rounds to be held at Suzuka Circuit on 20th – 21st of August.