

5th April 2024

2024 JAPANESE GRAND PRIX – FP1 & FP2

Ayumu Iwasa #40

First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:32.103, pos. 16th, 22 laps

"I've driven at Suzuka many times but it's a completely different, amazing and special feeling to do it in an F1 car. There is much more capacity to push, and the limit of the car is much higher. I got good experience for the future, and I appreciate the opportunity. I'm super thankful to Red Bull, Honda, and all the people at VCARB who have made me feel welcome as soon as I walked into the hospitality. There were no issues today and I was able to have a good feeling from the car straight away, so I was able to build up the pace quicker than expected, which was positive. Also, I think I could make quite some good progress with the team throughout the session. The main target was to get as much data for the team as I could, so I shouldn't push too much because it was important to just complete many laps. I hope they got some good data for the weekend. In the end, my second set of tyres was to build up the pace and get the feeling of driving an F1 car around the Suzuka circuit. I think we achieved all our targets and for the rest of the weekend, I will try to get more experience in the team. Today's drive has given me extra motivation to keep pushing hard."

Yuki Tsunoda #22

First Practice Session – Best lap: 1:31.230, pos. 9th, 20 laps

Second Practice Session – Best lap: 1:40.946, pos. 4th, 8 laps

"It's great to come back to Suzuka in front of the Japanese crowd; I enjoyed it so much and it felt great. It was a positive first day for us. I think we started good in FP1, finishing top 10, showing that the pace is there. The upgraded floor is targeted at slow-speed corners, whereas here is more medium- to high-speed corners so we're not expecting too much. Together we'll finetune a couple of areas where there's room for improvement before FP3, put it together for qualifying, and focus to extract the performance. It's been very special and it's only Friday, so I'm looking forward to giving it my all and fighting to achieve our maximum!"

Daniel Ricciardo #3

Second Practice Session – Best lap: 1:41.913, pos. 5th, 9 laps

"I sat out while Ayumu had his home run in FP1. Being settled at the pit wall during the first session, I went through a lot of data alongside watching the onboards and hearing the comments of the drivers, so this was definitely productive and there's always some learning. Then in FP2, when I jumped into the car, it was a bit frustrating to complete only a few laps due to the track conditions. The weather was in the middle and this meant it wasn't well enough for an inters running, nor a proper run on the dry. I didn't drive that much, so I'm giving you a long wrap-up of the day, where probably a few seconds would've been enough. Looking at the morning, Yuki looked like he got up to speed quickly and was in the top 10 pretty much all session. It felt like we were probably at the front of the midfield. You never know what happens in quali, but it looked like we're where we expected to be."

Alan Permane (Racing Director)

"It's always nice to race here in Suzuka. What an amazing track that the drivers love. This morning, we had Ayumu in the car, standing in for Daniel, and he did a perfect job for us. He got the car up to speed, was quick and gave good feedback. Ayumu was using the standard floor, while the new floor was on Yuki's car. That allowed us to get a comparison and very accurate assessment, which was great. We're happy with the new floor, it's delivering exactly what we predicted, and we'll be using it on both cars for the rest of the weekend. Yuki was up to speed quickly and had a very straight-forward morning, saying the car felt very good and he was happy with the balance. The afternoon, of course, was compromised by the rain. We had a quick look on the Inters because we haven't run them on the car yet this season, so we wanted to have a quick feel before we head into the European season, which we know can be wet, to see if there's anything we can learn. Daniel was in the car for FP2 and it's a shame that it was wet because that limited his running, but he's an experienced guy and knows the circuit well. It isn't ideal but he's got FP3 tomorrow and I don't expect it to hamper his preparation for qualifying tomorrow. Although it was only a handful of laps, he was happy."

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