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## Yamaha Factory Racing Shines in Suzuka Qualifying



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**Suzuka (Japan), 24th July 2015**

Round 2 of the 2015 FIM Endurance World Championship  
The 38<sup>th</sup> "Coca-Cola Zero" Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race

Friday - Timed practices

As the second day of action unfolded today in preparation for the legendary 38<sup>th</sup> “Coca-Cola Zero” **8H Top10 Trial**, the **Yamaha Factory Racing Team** continued to improve their dominant form in practice and qualifying.

Riders **Katsuyuki Nakasuga**, **Pol Espargaró** and **Bradley Smith** picked up where they left off yesterday at the top of the timesheets to set a blistering pace in the first free practice with a 2'07.888s lap. **Smith** had a small crash in the final stages of the session, but it had no lasting effect on the bike or the rider. They then raised the stakes even further. As the sun shone down on Suzuka and the track temperature rose, the trio used the **YZF-R1** to its full potential in the first qualifying session, the only team to drop the 2'07 mark with a stunning 2'06.877s lap.

The **Yamaha Factory team** continued their form in the afternoon with **Nakasuga** making the most of his knowledge of the Suzuka Circuit. **Espargaró** took a tumble on a fast lap near the end of his riding whilst overtaking a slower rider but was luckily uninjured. Both he and **Smith** made another step in their track knowledge with the team finishing in second, 0.419s from the front.

Fellow **Yamaha** entrants the **Yamaha Austria Racing Team** also kept their form from yesterday's practice, working hard to stay inside the top ten throughout the morning. Riders **Broc Parkes**, **Sébastien Morais** and **Iván Silva** rose to eighth in the free practice with a 2'10.383s before improving yet again in the first qualifying with a 2'09.730.

The afternoon saw **Parkes** deliver a stunning 2'08.973s lap that saw him enter the top five in the combined results for rider 1 Group A. His teammates both rode a strong session on the **YART YZF-R1**, wrapping up just outside the top ten in 11<sup>th</sup> position at the end of the session.

Defending Endurance World Champions **GMT94 Yamaha** continued their hunt for the perfect set up for Sunday's race. **David Checa** was clearly unfazed by yesterday's practice crash as he and teammates **Kenny Foray** and **Mathieu Gines** set about gaining further experience on the new tyre crew set a 2'11.177s in morning practice before picking up the pace to post a 2'09.871 in the first qualifying.

**Checa**, **Gines** and **Foray** kept up a consistent pace throughout the afternoon session, completing qualifying by putting the **GMT94 Yamaha YZF-R1** in 16<sup>th</sup> position.

This evening the **Yamaha** teams will be back on track for the night practice sessions. As today's session saw **Yamaha Factory Racing Team** within the top ten, they will be back on track tomorrow to take part in the **8H Top10 Trial** which will decide the first ten positions on the grid.

To view today's A-GROUP TIMED PRACTICES COMBINED RESULTS click [HERE](#).

The extended high-res imagery from today's A-GROUP TIMED PRACTICES is available [HERE](#).

## QUOTES



**Katsuyuki Nakasuga**

*"I was able to get a lap time of 2'06.877 today even though the machine spec we were using was for speed and not for time trials. This really proves how well the machine has progressed. Yesterday, Pol [Espargaró] set the best time overall for the day with 2'07.282, and today I was out to set a top time, so you might say the 2'06 range was a show of my pride as a rider. I didn't take risks in order to get that time either. It was a natural result of the way all three of us are inspiring each other. For the second session, the track temperature had risen and I was on used tires, so the 2'08 times I ran made it a good simulation of the race. (We're all motivated because we're competing this time as Yamaha's Factory team, and having two MotoGP riders as my partners has created a great environment to compete in. These factors create a lot of pressure, but if all three of us do our jobs, I think a good result will follow naturally. We obviously will be focused on getting good lap times."*



## Pol Espargarò

*"The bike is working very well and the lap times are good. This is the good part; the bad part was that it's difficult because in MotoGP when someone is slow, the difference is not this big and they usually race line when they see you, while here it's the opposite, but I'm learning. I don't know what tomorrow, because here we ride short laps and tomorrow we have Superpole so we have just one your eyes and push until the end. It's a new experience and I will give my 100%. I'm having so much fun riding this bike with a smile on my face!"*



## Bradley Smith

*"It was unfortunate I crashed this morning. I was playing around with the braking mark and lost the front bike. It's good to have made that mistake, because it shows how easy those kinds of things can happen in a race. We worked on doing a race run first because it was around the same time of Sunday's race, so everybody has an idea of what to expect. In the afternoon I wanted to push, and I was happy with my lap time which is very close to Nakasuga and Pol's. I didn't want to take too many risks and was still third which is not bad. I was happy, because these were the first fast laps that I've done here, because I've just been focusing on race pace. To have three riders within half a second is great, we are definitely the strongest team at the moment."*



## Wataru Yoshikawa

Team Manager

*"Today Bradley [Smith] and Pol [Espargarò] each fell once, but the bike was heavily damaged in Pol's crash as Pol had started one of his flying laps he came up on a slower rider at the Degner Curve and fell to avoid him. Fortunately, there were no rider injuries, but now the team has a lot of work to do to repair the bike. Still, as the air and track temperatures began to rise during the first qualifying session, Nakasuga was a lap time of 2'06.877. Then Pol clocked a 2'07.075 lap in the second session. Bradley had to run the session on the main machine and was extra careful, but still managed to record a time of 2'07.30. Everything is going well. There are no doubts about the abilities of our three riders, so one thing I want to make sure that they remember to keep a good margin of space when they come up on slower riders and avoid taking unnecessary risks."*