

#### Rd. 4 Chang International Circuit (Buriram, Thailand)

Arto - Panther Team Thailand participated in the Round 4 of 2018 SUPER GT series held at Chang International Circuit in Buriram, Thailand from June 30th to July 1st. It was the team's home coming race with LEXUS RCF GT 3. The drivers were Nattavude Charoensukhawatana and Nattapong Hortongkum.

#### ■ QUALIFYING

As the team made a major change in set-ups during Rd.3 in Suzuka and had a good feedback from it, they kept the car in the extension of the same set up. During the Saturday's official practice, Hortongkum drove the first half and Charoensukhawatana drove the second half to check on the car. The car was 17<sup>th</sup> fastest among 23 cars participated, and the team gained confidence to break through Q1.

Hortongkum, who had the better time during the official practice would be in charge of Q1. In the afternoon's official qualifying Q1, However, the weather suddenly deteriorated just before the session started, the track became under wet condition. The team had the right setup for the dry condition but lacked information under wet track, and Hortongkum ended in 19<sup>th</sup> place, not possible to break through Q1.

#### ■ RACE

The race day was sunny and dry, and as the car started from the back of the grid, the team decided to pit-in late to improve position while they can, and one again, Hortongkum took the wheels to start.

Hortongkum managed to yield the confusion at the start and improved to 13<sup>th</sup> place. There was a contact with GT500 car and suffered a minor damage to the car but after 20 laps, when other cars started their routine pit stop, he further improved his position to 5<sup>th</sup> on lap 30.

On lap 37, Hortongkum returned to pit for tyre change, refuel and driver change. The team struggled during the pitwork and Charoensukhawatana returned to the track in 19<sup>th</sup> place. Some slow cars on track in front of him prevented the car to improve positions, and it took until the end of the race he became 15<sup>th</sup> place as he received the checkered flag.

If the qualifying could have been under dry condition, we had more chance among the fast cars. But the team is definitely learning and improving; and we are already looking forward to the next round in Fuji.

#### ■ Official result

Qualifying: 19th in GT300 (23 cars) 1" 44.544

Race: 15th in GT300 (23 cars) 59 laps (1 lap behind)

#### ■ Driver' Quotes

A Driver: Nattavude Charoensukhawatana

The change of setup in Suzuka brought great success for us; less pitching during the brakes and more stability. With more laps under our belt, the car improved further, and we can feel that behind the wheels. We know the other cars are strong, and it is very difficult for us to reach the top teams, but we know we are not too far. I am confident, we made a big step forward.

**B driver: Nattapong Hortongkum**

This weekend, my task was hard braking. I have never driven a touring car with this much downforce until I came to Super GT, I was so lost but finally I am learning looking at data and getting advices. Even in the qualifying, I think we did well for bad condition. If it was under dry condition, I am sure we could've made it to Q2. In the race, first 10 laps was very challenging, I had a contact with GT500, when I was about to be overtaken and damaged the car, but overall, being able to improve position was on the positive side. Next round in Fuji, I hope we can fight among the faster cars.

**Team Manager: Stepon Samitasha**

Back in our home track, we hoped we would finish the race in good position. I'm sorry we lost momentum after the qualifying in rain. Our strategy was to have longer first stint, and we were 5<sup>th</sup> at one point and eventually received the checkered flag. Being back home, we are familiar with this track and I think we were able to relax here. We are getting used to our new car, and team is getting along very well. That helps us to fight in higher grounds. We are looking forward to going to round 5 in Fuji.