



true visions



arto-Panther Team Thailand
2018 SUPER GT RACE REPORT

Rd. 6 Sportsland Sugo (Miyagi Prefecture)

Arto - Panther Team Thailand participated in the Round 6 of 2018 SUPER GT series held at Sportsland Sugo in Miyagi prefecture from September 15 to 16. The drivers were Nattavude Charoensukhawatana and Nattapong Hortongkum.

The hottest summer is over, and cool wind of autumn began to blow across the race track. Last year, the race was under wet condition and team had not enough track time under dry. The drivers arrived to the track with many expectations and anticipations at the same time.

■ QUALIFYING

During the weekend, Saturday was expected to be in bad weather. Morning official practice had rain from half way, and the track turned to wet. Hortongkum ran off at SP corner but managed to come back to pit without major damage to the car.

For Q1, a temporary measure for this race was taken to divide GT300 cars into 2 groups. ARTO RC F GT3 started in Group A. Hortongkum recorded 1'21.094 but was not successful to advance to Q2.

■ RACE

The race day was sunny from the morning. Since the car was starting from the rearmost grid position, the team decided to let Hortongkum who ran the track mostly this weekend to start. The strategy was to delay the driver change and improve positions much as possible.

Hortongkum started steadily, and gradually improved his position as other cars drop out due to troubles and accidents. After 20 laps, other cars started their routing pit stops and driver changes, but Hortongkum stayed out on the track.

After 30 laps, Hortongkum started to feel the car losing balance from tyre wear, but the team told him to stay out after analyzing the situation. Eventually, the position went up every lap and by lap 40, it was 5th in GT300. Hortongkum told the team on the radio that the car was difficult to handle, but the team told him to keep out. The car went up to 3rd by lap 50.

Team then told him to box and change to Charoensukhawatana. He then went back on the track. Charoensukhawatana retreated to 20th, but still kept steady pace although he didn't have too much drive time this weekend. He drove for 24 laps where he went back to 18th and received checkered flag.

■ **Official Result**

Qualifying: 27th in GT300 (27 cars) 1" 21.094

Race: 18th in GT300 (27 cars) 75 laps (1 lap behind)

■ **Quotes:**

A Driver: Nattavude Charoensukhawatana

This track is very difficult and I can't really make good full lap. Not enough experience here, because last year, the race started with wet track and our car broke down early. So I can't say this is our best track. But this year the car is improving and the race was under dry condition so it was not too bad. The team is much stronger, and as long as we keep strong, we can improve our positions.

B driver: Nattapong Hortongkum

I remained at 80% of my power while thinking about tyre wearing at the start of the race. But it was only 30 laps before the tyre started to wear and lose grip. It was difficult to keep the balance after that, but I tried not to brake too hard. As for myself, I was getting lot better, it was a tough race but I am happy with the result. I am grateful of the team and my boss.

Team Manager: Suttipong Smittachartch

I was surprised when the car went off the track in free practice, but it came back to the pit without big damage, so the team calmly responded and let the car out immediately to continue running. It made me feel that the team has grown so much. In qualifying, I told the drivers not to push too much because the track was bad and that we are not familiar with it. However, in the race, we were able to improve position by keeping a stable pace and I was very happy for that. We still need to work harder, but we learnt a lot this weekend.