

May 21, 2010

Pre-event Media Conference

PRESENT:

Katsu TAGUCHI (TEAM MRF)
Chris ATKINSON (PROTON R3 MALAYSIA)
Alister McRAE (PROTON R3 MALAYSIA)
Hiroshi YANAGISAWA (CUSCO RACING)

Question: Let's start our official press conference we have here Alister McRae, Chris Atkinson, Katsu Taguchi and Hiroshi Yanagisawa. My first question is to Alister as you are the only driver that hasn't competed here, so I would like to hear your impression of the roads that you've done recce and how confident you are to do rally in the two days to come.

McRAE: For me it obviously was good to see some in car footage and I watched videos to get an idea. And I can see that the stages maybe faster than I thought. And because of the different time of the year, you can see more during the recce. Stages are good but they maybe rutted in the rally. I'm looking forward to it and can't wait to get started. Thank you.

Question: You've been competing for a number of years. It's the 3-rd year you come here. What about your feeling about this event. Ha sDo still have memories from you previous year experience, has anything really changed for you?

ATKINSON: It's strange because normally I know most of the roads, but this year it's four new stages and we have to ride on, except for Rikubetsu. OK, the stages are reverse, and like Alister said, the stages are much faster in places. This isn't ideal, we like fast stages but when it's straight roads, it is not as much fun.

Question: I think you've done very well during all the years you've competed here, how confident are you this time?

TAGUCHI: In English? This time is the first time to drive Evo X. In Malaysia we didn't go above 150kph, but here is the first time to do cornering at 150kph. Pace is also not so slow, so I don't think we'll be slow. It is a good chance to get a feeling of the car and do some settings, as well as testing. We are also aiming to win. When we competed in Malaysia they did some fast and good cornering.

Question: You compete every year, but you haven't won a single time. Are you aiming for victory?

YANAGISAWA: Last year we changed the car. We did some settings we are happy with. This year there are a number of EvoXs competing. We achieved good times during the shakedown, so I will try to win this year.

Question: You are racing in S2000 car and you are competing in N4. What is your feeling about how fast the car is, comparing the stages? Compare the car to S2000 and group N cars.

ATKINSON: I think that the world rally championship suits S2000 cars better than the APRC. There are more medium speed races. In Asia pacific we have quite slow rallies and quite fast rallies but as a team we are happy with the speed of the S2000 in Malaysia and I think we have to show that we can win the rally. If there are ruts, group N cars are better. If it is high speed stage and high speed cornering, S2000 are better. In total, I think S2000 is better, but I also think we'll have a good competition.

TAGUCHI: When we competed in Malaysia they did some fast and good cornering. If it is like in Japan, with lots of climbs and ruts, and a lot of power necessary, group N cars are still faster. So, as a summary, I think that we'll have a good competition.

YANAGISAWA: As Taguchi said, in Japan the roads are gravel, there're deep ruts, as well as steep climbs, so I think a group N car is going to be faster. At high speed courses, high speed cornering and in flat conditions, S2000 is better and has better breaking capabilities, so I think it'll win. In total, we'll have a good race.