

Suzuka Dream Cup 2005



Suzuka, Japan
5th - 7th August 2005

Report 3 - Wednesday 3rd August

This morning was only a short time from last night, in turn a very long day on the flight from Melbourne. But there was no alternative as the first one hour private practice session was scheduled for 6.30 AM.

We made it to the track by 6.04 AM and rushed to complete the tasks from the previous night and seal the car up for the moment of truth. Would the car live up to our expectations?

Derrick Rodgers was first in the driver's seat. He remembered the track from last year and had a good feel for the car itself. The rest of the team loaded themselves into the rental bus aiming to watch how the new improvements would translate into more speed. After one lap the bus could not keep up as Derrick found the groove.



But the more important task was to have Dan Evans our new 16 year old driver have his first drive of Aurora 101. He started slowly but had the car humming after several laps. Sure was different from a go kart. The soft rubber left on the track from racing cars and motorcycles stuck to the bus tyres but the Dunlop Solarmax tyres fitted to the solar car were excellent.



After a full hour we returned to the pits, changed motors and reviewed the results of the first real practice session. We were cautiously pleased.

A second session started at 8.00 AM. In this session we wanted to get more speed and we started with the 100 amp motor setting. It was too much. The motor controller shut down, and the temperature in the motor climbed. Then began a series of adjustments to determine what the maximum current could be during which Derrick whistled through a lap at 3'54. Just 19 seconds faster than his best qualifying lap in 2004. We have a fast car.

So by 9.00 AM our confidence had risen and we were looking for more breakfast.

The day was dedicated for consolidation and undertaking longer term jobs like building a new battery pack, tape cleaning the solar panel, recharging the existing battery and measuring the sun power.



Although the day was hot and humid with a bright sky the sun measurements did not exceed 0.75 sun. We were recording over 1300 watts in these conditions.

Our interpreter for the day was Junko an employee of the Suzuka track and world traveler. Nothing was too hard for her to investigate, even Jack's attempt to purchase a second hand Audi gearbox for a car in Hamilton.



The neighbouring team from Taiwan had their own set of activities as they approached their first ever race at Suzuka. We viewed the entry list for Saturday and noted that there is a new car from Tokai University as well as a much faster car from TIGA.



We are starting to get in the mood for racing and looking forward to tomorrow's 2 hour practice session. But at the moment 8 hours of sleep looks like being a real possibility.