

## Suzuka Dream Cup 2005



**Suzuka, Japan**  
5th - 7th August 2005

### Report 4 - Thursday 4th August

This was a much more sensible morning. We had a 2 hour practice session scheduled for noon so our track arrival was a leisurely 8.30 AM.

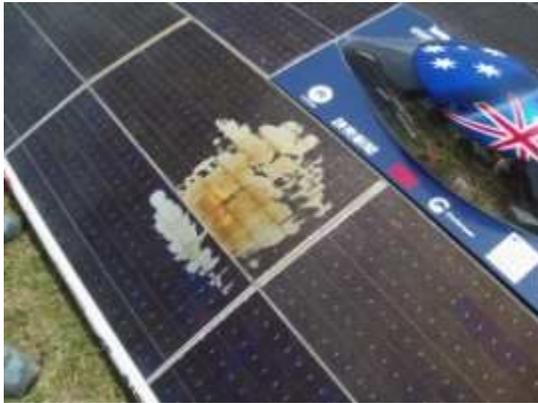
More preparation including a wheel alignment, chassis height setting, brake adjustment and more solar array cleaning. Our drivers had track protocol training and a formal examination to qualify officially as members of JAF. Our new interpreter, Ako Wanabe, helped us through the Japanese instructions and the tests were passed.

A final weigh in of the car confirmed that we stood at 165 kg the same as our measurements back in Melbourne and more than 20 kg lighter than we were last year. This is still more than the lightest Japanese entries. For example race favorite TIGA [Ashiya University] weighs just 140 kg. The other top entry from Osaka, OSU has also worked hard on reducing weight since 2004. We are looking forward to the qualifying session on Saturday morning.

At 12.00 Mr Kitayama arrived to lead Aurora 101 and Taiwan's Apollo PLUS around to the west circuit. This is the twistiest and most hilly part of the Suzuka Formula 1 circuit.

It was time for Dan Evans to notch up more time in the car. Again we tried to keep up in the bus but it was impossible. One problem affecting any cars on the track was the accumulation of race tyre rubber. This hot, sticky and dangerous because it sticks on the tyres in an irregular build up. The bus got higher and so did the solar car. We clocked Dan up to 115 kph; he seemed comfortable. Out of sight. About an hour of familiarization had us planning to change drivers when disaster struck.

Just before going under the bridge on the same corner that Damien McArthur had spun the car and hit the ripple strips Dan was on the radio declaring fire. The bus caught up to see the smoke. We all leapt out, ejected Dan as fast as possible, removed the top and extinguished the fire near the rear suspension tower. Two solar panels were badly damaged. Their supporting structure a black mess. Dejectedly we tried to assess how we could recover from this damage and face scrutineering on Friday.



The motor controller refused to activate. Towing the damaged car was the only way to return to the pits to face the damage. But luck runs in threes they say. Dan ran over the tow rope which caught on the front wheelcover breaking it in half. The front hydraulic brake line tore off, spreading brake fluid over the wheelmotor.



And to think we were looking forward to a steady afternoon and dinner in clean clothes.

Lunch was the needed consolation. Salad and beef curry and rice did some good except for Derrick who finally acknowledged he was running a fever and a bad head cold. He was sent to the track medical centre, filled with pills and sent back to bed to rest. Jack and Tom were showing similar symptoms but were indispensable for the repairs ahead.

So we assessed the damage. A broken motor controller, two heavily damaged solar panels a brake line repair, a blown battery fuse, new supporting structure for the damaged panels, a rebuild of the front wheel spat, a structural repair to the rear suspension mount and a serious electrical short in the motor.

By 9.00 PM most repairs were done. No chance to test on the track before Saturday, a loss of 80-130 watts from the solar panel, one spare motor gone and a very visible ugly blemish to our new solar array. Jack McArthur expressed the team spirit very well. He said there would be nothing to stop us from getting to the starting line on Saturday.



Already team member Peter Pudney is investigating how to purchase some new cells to build replacement panels for the World Solar Challenge in September. We received good advice from Stuart Watkinson of AERL and Dave Finn at Tritium.

We finished the day with lots of fingers crossed. Tomorrow the full list of teams arrive and we face scrutineering. Already there is a buzz at the track.

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