



2008 All-Japan Snowmobile Championships, Round 3, Wassamu, Hokkaido

Date: February 10, 2008 (Sunday)
Venue: Wassamu Circuit (Hokkaido)
Weather: Clear

Class: Super Class
Contestants: 16
Finals: 15 min. + 1 lap x 2 heats



Eikura has moved into 2nd place in the ranking, 20 points behind the leader. Expectations are high for a title win over the remaining three rounds

Eikura races to another overall win, his second this season!

At the start of the first heat, it was Yamaha rider Masafumi Terasaki who grabbed the holeshot. He was followed into the first turn by Shinji Tozawa, Tomonori Matsuda (A) and Nobuaki Eikura. But in that first turn, Tozawa and Matsuda bumped into each other and took a fall. Besides that, Terasaki developed machine trouble in the first lap that forced him to retire from the race. That left Eikura to take over the lead and run on alone well ahead of the pack.

Entering the middle stages of the race, Eikura continued to race at a steady, high pace, but he was being chased all the time by Masaki Sasaki (S). On lap seven Sasaki had closed in on Eikura's tail, and on lap nine he slipped past Eikura into the lead. Shortly after that, however, Sasaki took a fall that put Eikura back in the lead and he ran on that way to win the heat.

Meanwhile, Yamaha rider Kiyotaka Kawagoe, who had come through the first lap in 4th position, lost two places after that to finish the heat 6th. Tozawa recovered quickly from his fall and managed to finish 10th, while Daishi Takamura finished 11th after a slow start.

In heat two, Matsuda took the holeshot, followed closely by Eikura and Tozawa. After that, however, the two Yamaha riders were unable to match Matsuda's pace, and by lap four he had built up a roughly 10-second lead. Eikura and Tozawa continued to run in 2nd and 3rd positions respectively. Matsuda continued on that way to the checkered.

In the battle for 2nd, Eikura was able to run away from Tozawa and go on to finish 2nd. With his pace slowing somewhat in the latter stages of the race, Tozawa was passed by Sasaki on lap 11, but he was able to hang on to a 4th-place finish.

After starting the race in 4th position, Kawagoe eventually dropped two places to finish 6th. Takamura got off to a slow start and was unable to make up much ground during the race, eventually finishing 12th. Still feeling the effects of the injury he received at the last round in Nagano, Terasaki slowed during the early stages of the race and finally crossed the finish in 15th.

With this day's results, Eikura got his second overall win of the season, following his victory in the opening round at Yuzawa in Niigata. The day's 2nd-place winner was Matsuda and 3rd went to Sasaki.

Nobuaki Eikura (1st/2nd: 1st overall)

"In the latter half of the first heat I was passed by Sasaki, but he took a fall on the very next turn and I was able to get the win. In the second heat, Matsuda got the holeshot and was able to get away from me before I got up to pace, so I was completely beaten. Still I was able to get the overall win. I had been depressed about my performance in round two, so this win has been important in getting me back on course."

Shinji Tozawa (10th/4th: 6th overall)

"In heat one I had a brush with Matsuda that took me down. That is part of racing, but I still can't help feeling disappointed because I was leading the race when it happened. In heat two I was able to race at a good pace in the early going but in

the second half I started to get nervous about the course conditions, which kept me from picking up the pace and caused me to lose position. The next round will be at our team's home course, Shibetsu. So I want to do my best to get a win."

Kiyotaka Kawagoe (6th/6th: 5th overall)

"In this round I was able to finish in the points in both heats, so that is a point of progress for me. But in both heats I fell from 4th position to a 6th-place finish. I think that this happens because I am not able to handle the machine well. But I think that I found a way to bring out the machine's power potential this time, so I am going to aim to do better in the next round. I hope I will be able to live up to the expectations and support from the fans and the efforts of the team crew."

Daishi Takamura (11th/12th: 10th overall)

"In the start of both heats of the finals I got trapped between the machines on both sides of me and ended up having to start the races from near the back of the pack. During the early stages of the races I found myself unable to keep up with the high pace of the leaders and recover ground. This is what I have to work on from now on. In the next round I am going to concentrate on my starts and keeping a high pace in the early stages of the race."

Masafumi Terasaki (DNF/15th: 15th overall)

"I got the holeshot in the first heat and took the early lead in an ideal pattern but I was forced to retire due to machine trouble. In the second heat my injury from the last round in Nagano started to get painful, so my pace slowed. I had finally gotten a good result in the last round and was looking forward to the races here at Wassamu, where I have always done well. So I'm really disappointed."

Yamaha Racing Team Manager, Takuji Nakano

"After three rounds now, everyone is starting to get results from their efforts. But the machine hasn't reached the point where it can bring out the riders' full potential. That is why we have had a difficult time in these first three rounds. This was a race that made me aware that our development team has to be able to respond more quickly."

Club YAMAHA Racing Manger, Susumu Okeda

"I feel responsible as the team manager for the fact that Terasaki had to retire from the first race with machine trouble after successfully capturing the holeshot. Kawagoe finished in the points in both heats for us. He has also gotten used to the machine now. So I hope to see him move up to the next level of performance in the next round. Takamura showed his lack of experience in the Super Class this time. I think he has found what he needs to work on, however, so I look forward to progress from now on."

Super Class (heat 1) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
2	Masaki Sasaki	ski-doo	TEAM ENAGY-X & HRD
3	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
4	Hironori Hayashi	ski-doo	Team RSS Izumisawa
5	Sho Inaba	POLARIS	RACING TEAM TAS
6	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Blue MAX
10	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
11	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Fuji Auto RC
12	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	BLUE MAX

Super Class (heat 2) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
2	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
3	Masaki Sasaki	ski-doo	TEAM ENAGY-X & HRD
4	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
5	Hironori Hayashi	ski-doo	Team RSS Izumisawa
6	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Blue MAX
12	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Fuji Auto RC
14	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	BLUE MAX
15	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	Club Yamaha Team target

Series ranking after round three (tentative)

1	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	109
2	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	89
3	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo	65
4	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	60
5	Yohei Kubota	ski-doo	56
6	Masaki Sasaki	ski-doo	55
8	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	37
9	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	34
11	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	32
15	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	25

(A): ARCTIC CAT, (P): POLARIS, (S): ski-doo

* The next round in Shibetsu will be held on Feb. 17 (Sun.) at the Shibetsu Kasen Bousai Station-yoko special course.