

2008 All-Japan Snowmobile Championships, Round 1, Yuzawa, Niigata

Date: January 27, 2008 (Sun.)
Venue: Yuzawa Special Course (Niigata)
Weather: Snow

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

The day's win went to Eikura after a close battle with his rivals



FX Nytro riders also won the A Level S1 and S2 Classes



Eikura takes both heats to win the day for Yamaha!

On January 27, the first round of the 2008 All-Japan Snowmobile Championships was held at a special course set up at Yuzawa (Niigata Pref.).

In heat one Shinji Tozawa got the hole shot and Nobuaki Eikura followed in 2nd place to prove immediately the stunning performance potential of the new Yamaha machine. On the first lap Eikura took the lead with Tozawa close behind, and through the early stages of the race these two Yamaha riders battled one-on-one in the lead.

On lap five, Tozawa moved past Eikura into the lead again, only to have Eikura and Hironori Hayashi (S) pass him on lap seven. On lap eight, Tozawa was also passed by Tomonori Matsuda (A) and from that point on the race developed into a three-way contest between Eikura, Hayashi and Matsuda. Later, when Matsuda moved into 2nd position, a tight battle raged between Eikura and Matsuda from that stage. Matsuda tried using a variety of lines through the curves to get past Eikura, but the Yamaha rider always managed to keep ahead with skillful blocking lines. Throughout the head-to-tail battle that went on and on, Eikura's strength and concentration never waned, as he rode on to victory in the first race of the season. Matsuda finished 2nd and Hisashi Hashiba (S) finished 3rd.

After riding through the middle stages of the race in 4th

position, Tozawa lost further ground to finish heat one 11th place. Yamaha riders Masafumi Terasaki and Daishi Takamura got off to slow starts and finished 10th and 12th respectively. Another Yamaha rider, Kiyotaka Kawagoe failed to qualify for the finals due to a mishap in the qualifying.

In the second heat Tozawa once again got the hole shot and Eikura followed in 2nd place, giving the Yamaha Racing Team another 1-2 start. In the early laps, Tozawa maintained his lead with Eikura close behind until Matsuda came in between them to make a bid for the lead, as in heat one.

Things changed on lap six, when Eikura slipped past Tozawa into the lead. Matsuda also got past Tozawa on lap seven and moved up on Eikura's tail to turn the race into a replay of heat one. It was also a battle between the lighter 2-stroke machine of Matsuda and the more powerful 4-stroke Yamaha "FX Nytro" of Eikura. To the end, Eikura made skillful use of that power to stay in the lead to the finish and win the second heat and the day's overall victory. Matsuda finished 2nd and Hashiba (S) finished 3rd to put the same three riders on the podium as in heat one.

Tozawa again lost ground in over the second half of the race and finished 8th. Yamaha riders Takamura finished 9th and Terasaki finished 11th.

remaining five rounds I am going to work to be the one in the spotlight."

Daishi Takamura (9th/12th: 9th overall)

"This season I realized my dream of becoming a member of the Club YAMAHA Racing team and getting the kind of support that could let me concentrate fully on my racing. But that has also increased the pressure on me to produce good results and I was so tense all the time that I couldn't do well even in the practice and qualifying sessions. In the next round I am going to remind myself that I am a challenger and race as hard as I can."

Masafumi Terasaki (10th/11th: 10th overall)

"This was probably the worst race I have ever had. There was the fact that the settings weren't where I wanted them to be, but even more than that I think I was beaten by the other riders on the mental level as well. This is a very important year for me when I know that I have to move up to the next level as a competitor and I have been preparing myself for that, so I am really disappointed in my performance. I intend to rethink my position and approach to prepare for the next round in Nagano."

Kiyotaka Kawagoe (failed to qualify for final)

"I was riding so well today and was full of determination to get my revenge for just missing out on the championship title last season. But while running in 3rd position in the last lap of the qualifying I had a bump up with another machine, was knocked off the course and failed to qualify for the finals. I am going to take this disappointment to heart and come back with renewed determination to win in the next Nagano round."

Yamaha Racing Team Manager, Takuji Nakano

"Eikura got a perfect win (both heats) and Tozawa got both hole shots. So, this has been a race that proved all the things we tried during the off-season were right. Of course we won't rest on today's success but will continue to work on maturation of the machine so that we can realize our dual goals of contributing to production model development and winning the season title."

Club YAMAHA Racing Manger, Susumu Okeda

"Like last year, our goal is to win the championship, and to do that, it is important that our riders support each other and work together to heighten their competitive skills. But this time all three of them seem to have forgotten their roles and were not concentrated fully enough on the task before them. This is something that both the riders and myself as team manager must take responsibility for. For the next round I want to see us renew our consciousness of our tasks go into the race with new conviction."

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

"This year there are many changes, with the new machine and the new team. In particular the new machine has been hard for me to figure out how to ride well, so I entered the start of the season not knowing how well I'd do. But my results in the qualifying gave me confidence for the finals. In both heats it came down to a battle between me and Matsuda and I was able to win with a strategy of watching his movements and cutting off the lines he tried to take."

Shinji Tozawa (11th/8th: 7th overall)

"In both heats I was able to get out in the lead and get in position to control the race, but in mid race my arms tightened up and began to fall off the pace. I couldn't take advantage of the opportunities before me. But the machine is set up at a very high level and I know I will be able to race well in the coming rounds, so I am not really disappointed. This time Eikura stole the show, but in the

Super Class (heat 1) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
2	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
3	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo	KRC Kawase Racing
4	Sho Inaba	POLARIS	
5	Hajime Matsuno	POLARIS	Team Kita Shinsyu Miyuki
6	Hironori Hayashi	ski-doo	Izumisawa Racing Team

10	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	Club Yamaha Team target
11	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
12	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Fuji Auto RC

Super Class (heat 2) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
2	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
3	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo	KRC Kawase Racing
4	Tomosuke Sano	ski-doo	TEAM HRD
5	Yohei Kubota	ski-doo	TEAM KAZUKIKAKU
6	Hajime Matsuno	POLARIS	Team Kita Shinsyu Miyuki

8	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
9	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Fuji Auto RC
11	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	Club Yamaha Team target

Series ranking after round one (tentative)

1	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	40
2	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	34
3	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo	30
4	Tomosuke Sano	ski-doo	22
5	Hajime Matsuno	POLARIS	21
6	Yohei Kubota	ski-doo	18
7	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	13
9	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	11
10	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	11
13	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	8