



2008 All-Japan Snowmobile Championships, Round 4, Shibetsu, Hokkaido

Date: February 17, 2008 (Sunday)
Venue: Shibetsu Kasen Bousai Station-yoko special course (Hokkaido)
Weather: Cloudy Contestants: 18
Finals: 16
Finals: 15 min. + 1 lap x 2 heats

Kawagoe aiming for his first podium finish this season at the next round in his native Aomori



Tozawa has captured overall 8th ranking



Kazuyuki Go (Ke-go-Racing) wins both the S1 and S2 classes

Kawagoe captures 7th overall with 5th/9th heat finishes

While Masafumi Terasaki took the fastest start in the first heat but Tomonori Matsuda (A) overtook him in the first corner. He was followed by Hironori Hayashi (S), Masaki Sasaki (S) and then Terasaki.

Terasaki, who was running fourth on the first lap, took a fall and was left behind. Other Yamaha riders entered the second lap with Nobuaki Eikura in 8th, Kiyotaka Kawagoe in 9th and Shinji Tozawa in 11th position. On that second lap it was Eikura who took a spill and lost several places. In the third lap, Kawagoe's 7th position made him Yamaha's leading rider. In the top group, Tomosuke Sano (S) led the race but in the latter half Matsuda and Sasaki closed the gap so that by lap ten Matsuda had emerged in the lead. Matsuda, however, took a tumble, giving Sano the lead once more. But Sasaki immediately grabbed first position and went on to win. Sano took 2nd and Matsuda finished 3rd.

Yamaha rider results: Kawagoe, who displayed stable riding throughout, finished 5th while Eikura, who had fallen, recovered to finish 6th. Although Tozawa was in 8th position at one stage he dropped two places in the latter half to finish 10th and Terasaki closed in to come 12th. Daishi Takamura did not compete in this round.

In the second heat, despite a good start by Eikura and Kawagoe, the two bumped into each other and lost ground as a result. Tozawa, however, dominated the scramble at the start and was followed by Terasaki.

The order at the end of the first lap was Tozawa, Matsuda, Hajime Matsuno (P) and Terasaki, but in the third lap Matsuda emerged in first. In contrast, Tozawa was gradually left behind, allowing Matsuda a runaway lead. Matsuda subsequently kept his hold on the lead to win, capturing his second overall victory this season.

In 2nd was Sano, who rose to second position in lap seven. In 3rd was Sano who battled with Seiichi Akutsu (S), and Akutsu eventually won out.

Although Tozawa managed to maintain second place until the middle stages, he later dropped down to 5th position and a battle developed with Terasaki who was in 6th. Terasaki won this to take 5th while Tozawa took 6th place. Kawagoe was behind in 12th position in the early stages but ran an aggressive race to finish in 9th place. Eikura, who was running in 9th position, ran off the course on lap six, which caused him to drop back to a 12th place finish.

Shinji Tozawa (10th/6th. 8th overall)

"I had bad starts right from the qualifying and although I changed some settings for heat one it did not go well and I started from the rear. After that, in an effort to improve my ranking I tried to change my lines while racing, but that took a toll on me physically so I was unable to catch up. In heat two, I dropped some places in the latter half but I was able to acquit myself well in difficult conditions up to the middle stages. It has now become clearer which areas of the machine need to be improved. I intend to work with our staff on these issues."

Nobuaki Eikura (6th/12th. 10th overall)

"I took a spill in heat one and dropped back to 12th position, but by becoming totally absorbed in trying to get even one place ahead I recovered to finish 6th. In the second heat I was too determined to cross the line ahead of Matsuda and made a series of errors. My overall win at Wassamu made me ambitious to "do it again" and I think this impacted on my riding."

Kiyotaka Kawagoe (5th/9th: 7th overall)

"Although the result wasn't satisfying, the feedback I gained from racing was a feeling that I was even more at one with the machine than in the previous round, which is another step forward. The next round is in Aomori, which was cancelled last year. A lot of fans will come to watch the races, so I certainly want to do what I can to give them a podium finish."

Masafumi Terasaki (12th/5th: 9th overall)

"My performance in this round enabled me to regain confidence for starts. However, I took a spill in the first lap of heat one and came 12th. In heat two I also led at the start but I was too conscious of my heat one fall and failed to crank up the pace. Missing out on a podium finish despite having so many chances makes me want to get the start right in Aomori and earn a place on the podium."

Yamaha Racing Team Manager, Takuji Nakano

"This round was one that gave me the strong feeling that we still have a lot to do. But, given that Yamaha's 4-stroke machines have made great strides in terms of aspects like engine and frame, in this and other classes as well, I do not believe that we are on the wrong track. We are now down to the last two rounds but we will stick together as a team to overcome the problems that have surfaced in this round."

Club YAMAHA Racing Manger, Susumu Okeda

"Once again in this round the whole team approached the races as a cohesive unit. Although the result was disappointing, in terms of race 'style' they both raced aggressively in harsh course conditions. Next time, I trust we can achieve a race that delivers results as well as 'style'."

Super Class (heat 1) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Masaki Sasaki	ski-doo	TEAM ENAGY-X & HRD
2	Tomosuke Sano	ski-doo	TEAM HRD
3	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
4	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo KRC	Kawase Racing
5	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Blue MAX
6	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
9	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	BLUE MAX
10	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
12	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	Club Yamaha Team target

Super Class (heat 2) Contestants: 16

Pos.	Rider	Machine	Team
1	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	TEAM ARCTIC
2	Tomosuke Sano	ski-doo	TEAM HRD
3	Seiichi Akutsu	ski-doo	TEAM RCC-MXZ Racing
4	Hajime Sano	PORARIS	Team Kitashinsyu Miyuki
5	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	Club Yamaha Team target
6	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team
9	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	Club YAMAHA Blue MAX
10	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	BLUE MAX
12	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	Yamaha Racing Team

Series ranking after round three (tentative)

1	Tomonori Matsuda	ARCTIC CAT	144
2	Nobuaki Eikura	YAMAHA	103
3	Hisashi Hashiba	ski-doo	86
4	Masaki Sasaki	ski-doo	84
5	Shinji Tozawa	YAMAHA	76
6	Hajime Matsuno	PORARIS	66
10	Kiyotaka Kawagoe	YAMAHA	52
11	Masafumi Terasaki	YAMAHA	47
13	Ryuei Mikami	YAMAHA	38
14	Daishi Takamura	YAMAHA	37