

Marc Márquez puts together the perfect Sprint at Motegi, taking the win with the Ducati Lenovo Team. Francesco Bagnaia retires in the closing stages

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The Ducati Lenovo Team took victory in the Motegi Sprint with Marc Márquez, who claimed his twenty-second win in the Saturday race. Francesco Bagnaia was forced to retire with one lap remaining.

Márquez had an excellent start from second place on the grid and took the lead after the first two corners. Marc then managed the race perfectly to cross the finish line as the winner. Bagnaia, thirteenth in qualifying, stayed in touch with the top ten for most of the Sprint but experienced a significant grip issue in the second half of the encounter, which eventually forced him back to the pits at the end of the penultimate lap.

The Ducati Lenovo Team will be back in action tomorrow morning at 9:40 local time (GMT +9) for the warm-up, which will be followed by the Grand Prix of Japan, to be contested over a 24-lap distance from 7:00.

Marc Márquez (#93 Ducati Lenovo Team) - 1st

"Securing a front-row start, especially in the first two positions, was the key to having a good Sprint. We made a small modification ahead of this race and I felt a lot better on the bike and rode in a way that's more akin to what I like. I was quite comfortable in the lead and I'm happy with this win. Now we focus on the long race. We need to analyse the condition of the rear soft tyre and make the best decision ahead of tomorrow. It won't be easy, but I would put pen to paper to have the same feeling I had today."

Francesco Bagnaia (#63 Ducati Lenovo Team) - DNF

"It was a difficult Sprint. We didn't know what to expect from the rear tyre given the new asphalt of the track. We made the choice that we reckoned was the best compromise, but with the lack of grip, the tendency is to overheat the tyre, and unfortunately that's what happened as a consequence. From lap six, I started to experience some vibrations on corner entry and, to avoid this, I ended up using the rear brake more. This led to the rear tyre overheating quite a lot. We need to work to find

a bit more grip, as this would surely allow us to do better.”

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