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## Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. Announces YAMAHA FACTORY RACING TEAM Rider Line-up at the Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race

Iwata (Japan), 25th May 2015

Round 2 of the 2015 FIM Endurance World Championship  
The 38<sup>th</sup> "Coca-Cola Zero" Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race

Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. is proud to announce that the **YAMAHA FACTORY RACING TEAM** will be competing in the 38<sup>th</sup> "Coca-Cola Zero" **Suzuka 8 Hours Endurance Road Race**, which is to be held at Suzuka Circuit in Mie Prefecture from July 23 to 26, 2015. This will be the first time since 2002 that Yamahas fielded a factory team for this prestigious race.

The team's rider line-up will consist of reigning JSB1000 class champion of the All Japan Road Race Championship **Katsuyuki Nakasuga** and MotoGP riders **Pol Espargarò** and **Bradley Smith**. They will ride a factory machine based on the new **YZF-R1** and specially developed for competition in the Suzuka 8 Hours as they set out to win **Yamaha** its first victory in this event in 19 years and its fifth in the race's history.

**Nakasuga** is one of the top **Yamaha** riders in Japan and is currently in contention to win an unprecedented fourth consecutive title in the premier class of the All Japan Road Race Championship. He has raced in the Suzuka 8 Hours seven times before, with a best result of fourth place in 2014.

**Espargarò** and **Smith** will be entering the Suzuka 8 Hours for the first time and will bring to the challenge their vast experience in the world's premier motorcycle road racing category, MotoGP. They finished the 2014 MotoGP season ranked 6th and 8th, respectively.

Serving as team manager will be **Wataru Yoshikawa**, the manager of the **YAMAHA FACTORY RACING TEAM** in the All Japan Road Race Championship. Encouraged by the cheers of **Yamaha** fans, the team members, riders and sponsors will pull together as they aim for a coveted victory at the Suzuka 8 Hours.

**Yamaha Motor** participates in racing activities around the world under three basic policies: branding, feedback of technology and promotional activities. This season, **Yamaha Motor** is once again fielding factory teams in three All Japan championships (road racing, motocross and trials) and, with the introduction of the new **YZF-R1**, new programs have been launched to further stimulate its racing activities in countries around the world.

Factory participation in this year's Suzuka 8 Hours is one example of these racing activities, and through this participation **Yamaha Motor** seeks to prove the performance potential of the new **YZF-R1** while at the same time gaining technological expertise, promoting development of human resources and sharing the excitement of rewarding experiences in motorsport as an embodiment of the "**Revs your Heart**" brand slogan.

### QUOTES



**Katsuyuki Nakasuga**  
Rider

*"This season I am serving as a factory rider for the first time in an attempt to be the first rider ever to win four consecutive titles in the premier class of the All Japan Road Race Championship, while using the new YZF-R1. Now I am very glad that I am being given another new challenge of competing on the factory team in the Suzuka 8 Hours, which I am excited about like never before. I am also looking forward to competing together with two such outstanding riders as [Pol] Espargarò and [Bradley] Smith, and I feel this will be a good opportunity for me to improve my racing skills. Of course, I will be going for nothing less than the win. I will work together with the team to show that the new YZF-R1 is the fastest machine on the track, and I will do my best to bring an experience of the greatest possible Kando\* to the fans that have waited so long for the comeback of the Yamaha factory team and a Suzuka 8 Hours victory. I hope everyone will come to the circuit during race week to cheer us on."*

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**Pol Espargarò**  
Rider

*"I am really happy that Yamaha has chosen me to represent them at one of the most famous motorsport events, which is the Suzuka 8 Hour race. I feel honoured to take part in it, but there will be a lot to learn. I am under no illusion that it will be easy as I have never raced in an endurance event before and I don't know the YZF-R1, even though a lot of people speak very highly about it. In addition, the MotoGP calendar is very demanding and we will have to work through the training for the event, in between the races. Therefore, we need to work as much as possible in order to be prepared for the race, but I'm very excited to get this opportunity. Moreover, it will be nice to work with Bradley as a partner where we will fight together, instead of against each other. I think we will complement each other very well and have a great time. The only thing is that neither of us know the Suzuka track, so I hope Nakasuga-san can help us with everything, which includes the circuit, the bike and the correct strategies that we need to have a successful eight hour race. It will be special and we will do our best to reward the faith that Yamaha has put in us."*

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**Bradley Smith**  
Rider

*"Firstly, I want to give Yamaha a massive thank you for considering me to be part of their Suzuka 8 Hour team, which is a legendary event. I'm looking forward to trying a new form of motorcycle racing and even more so along with my MotoGP teammate Pol and Katsuyuki Nakasuga, who has a strong record at this special race. I think it will be an unforgettable event and it will add another chapter to my life with Yamaha. I'm also very excited to try the new Yamaha YZF-R1, which I have heard a lot about and it will be really great to finally get the opportunity to ride it. Of course, I will take this event very seriously as we are going to be part of the official Factory Team effort, so I will head to Japan with the full intention of getting a high scoring result for Yamaha."*

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**Wataru Yoshikawa**  
Team Manager

*"This time we have assembled a great team that really has me personally very excited. [Katsuyuki] Nakasuga is a rider with a wealth of experience racing at Suzuka Circuit and in the Suzuka 8 Hours, and in addition to running fast times, we will need his presence as a team leader to help propel us to victory. A critical point for our success will be to have [Pol] Espargarò and [Bradley] Smith learn from Nakasuga's Suzuka experience and then deliver the performances that they are capable of as such outstanding riders. To do this, we will need to supply them with a highly competitive machine that they will feel good riding on, and to create an environment that enables them to concentrate fully on their racing. The Suzuka 8 Hours is a very tough race, but we are determined to win it and show that we are the strongest team of all. To win, it is also vital that we have the support of the fans. Let's all strive together to get the victory and share the Kando that it will surely bring."*

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