

Note 93



Honda engine designation system

From the start of their Formula 2 programme in 1978 until departure from Formula 1 at the end of 1992 Honda racing engines were designated according to the following new system:-

RA (3 figures) E = Racing Automobile (.....) Engine
(In Japan, because of the nature of their own pictographic written language, English is (or was) often used in scientific or engineering reports*);

The 3 figures were selected as:-

1st Formula i.e. 2 or 1;

2nd No. of cylinders. When F1 10 or 12 cylinder engines were built, the 1st and 2nd figures were combined (possibly because printed drawing forms only had 6 spaces for type designation!);

3rd Last figure of the year.

This designation system had to be extended in the 3NA era as competition drove many modifications during the season. The basic year code was given a "Version x" to identify a change. When the 1992 V12 was redesigned completely it was designated RA122E/B (69).

*When, after the end of the 2nd Pressure-Charged era, Honda were prepared to release data on their RA168E TurboCharged engine, they chose to write a paper in English for the American Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), (DASO 20) ([see Appendix 3](#)).

After they departed from Formula 1 in 1992 they were once again prepared to give details of their last 3rd Naturally-Aspirated era engine, the RA122E/B. This time they gave the paper in Japanese to the Japanese Society of Automotive Engineers (JSAE) (DASO 69). This was translated by Weslake Developments and a copy was supplied to the author by courtesy of their Managing Director, the late Brian Lovell. Perhaps using their own language showed the confidence of Honda after a 6 year series of powering Champion cars.
