

BAHRAIN PAIN FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 18 November 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will start the final race of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season from the third row of the grid after a frustrating qualifying for the 6 Hours of Bahrain.

Both TS050 HYBRID cars had their fastest qualifying laps deleted for exceeding track limits at the Bahrain International Circuit as the drivers pushed to the limit and beyond in the battle for grid positions.

That left the #6 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi in fifth place as they challenge to overturn a 17-point deficit on the drivers' World Championship-leading Porsche #2.

Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima will start from sixth place in their #5 car when they look to end the season positively at a venue where TOYOTA has won two of its previous four WEC races.

Having waited a few minutes to begin in order for track conditions to improve, Anthony started qualifying in the #5 and looked to have put his car in the fight for the leading positions until his lap time was deleted.

That left him needing to set another flying lap on the same tyres, giving him little chance to challenge. His subsequent lap was around one second slower than his earlier effort.

Kamui was first at the wheel of the #6 and recorded a clean lap before handing over to Mike, who immediately broke the 1min 40secs barrier and appeared to have moved up the order with a lap quicker than last year's pole time.

Unfortunately that time was also deleted due to a track limits violation and Mike's next lap was not enough to lift the #6 off the third row, with an average time 1.015secs away from the pole-winning Audi #8. Kazuki completed qualifying for the #5 and earned sixth place.

Despite the disappointment at today's result, TOYOTA will regroup and approach the race in a positive frame of mind with its sights firmly set on a strong end to the season to enhance its positions in both World Championship standings.

TS050 HYBRID #5 (Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima)

Free practice 3: 3rd (1min 40.852secs). 32 laps

Qualifying: 6th (1min 40.776secs average)

Anthony Davidson: "That was frustrating. I was really pleased with my lap until I realised that I went a bit wide on turn 13 so I got penalised. I had to do another lap when the tyres were past their best. It's a pity but I am still pleased with the job that I did. The car should have better pace in the race so I'm looking forward to it."

Kazuki Nakajima: "It was a difficult qualifying for me. I didn't really feel like I drove at my best on my lap and I also had some traffic. So nothing really worked for me today but it's only qualifying. Our preparation has been mostly for the race so we hope it will come back to us tomorrow and we can fight at the front again."

TS050 HYBRID #6 (Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi)

Free practice 3: 6th (1min 41.276secs). 28 laps

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Qualifying: 5th (1min 40.222secs average)

Mike Conway: "I had a really good lap and I got the maximum out of the car. It's just a pity it got deleted; I thought it was okay but I respect the decision. I felt we had a chance to get on the front row but that's life. We have good race pace so we can still get a strong result; we will keep pushing flat-out."

Kamui Kobayashi: "The track wasn't great at the start of qualifying so I'm quite pleased with my lap. When Mike's time was deleted we didn't have much chance to improve. It is a bit frustrating but qualifying doesn't mean much because the race is long. We still have a chance for the championship so we will see what we can do."

Free practice 3 results:

1st	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	1min 40.318secs	31 laps
2nd	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+0.488secs	29 laps
3rd	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.534secs	32 laps
4th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+0.682secs	30 laps
5th	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/Lieb)	+0.696secs	32 laps
6th	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.958secs	28 laps

Qualifying results:

1st	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	1min 39.207secs
2nd	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+0.264secs
3rd	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/Lieb)	+0.462secs
4th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+0.491secs
5th	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.015secs
6th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.569secs

A German translation of this press release is available on www.toyotahybridracing.com. High-resolution copyright-free photos are available for editorial use at www.toyota-motorsport-photos.com.

About TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in the World Endurance Championship:

TOYOTA first competed in the World Endurance Championship (WEC) in 1983, marking the start of a long period of participation in endurance racing. Since 1985, TOYOTA cars have raced in 18 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on five occasions. TOYOTA entered the revived WEC in 2012, combining the expertise from TOYOTA Higashi-Fuji Technical Centre, where the hybrid powertrain is developed, with TOYOTA Motorsport GmbH's support and facilities for chassis development. The multi-national team is based in Cologne, Germany and includes engineers from TOYOTA's motorsport and hybrid department, who deliver technology and know-how back into road car development. Since 2012, TOYOTA has earned 10 pole positions and won 11 races, finishing on the podium a total of 31 times. In 2014, the team won the drivers' and manufacturers' World Championships with the TS040 HYBRID while a year later TOYOTA celebrated 30 years since its first Le Mans entry. TOYOTA Motorsport GmbH combines its role in the WEC project with its other activities, such as the supply of a World Rally Championship engine for TOYOTA's return to the category in 2017, as well as its engineering services business and customer motorsport activities.

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