

SPEEDY START FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 14 April 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing got its 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season off to a productive start by setting the fastest lap time in the first practice sessions for the opening round, the 6 Hours of Silverstone.

Following a five-month break since the concluding round of the 2016 season, TOYOTA arrived in Great Britain with a heavily-updated TS050 HYBRID to challenge Porsche for the World Championship crown.

Those updates paid dividends immediately at Silverstone, with Kazuki Nakajima, in the #8 TS050 HYBRID which he shares with Sébastien Buemi and Anthony Davidson, setting the fastest lap of the day. His lap time of one minute 38.210 was the quickest recorded by an LMP1 car at Silverstone since the return of WEC in 2012.

The #7 car of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López was close behind, ending the day just 0.234secs off top spot after two 90-minute practice sessions in cool, overcast conditions.

With 35,000km of testing completed on the updated car, the target for today's sessions was to fine-tune the high-downforce specification TS050 HYBRID for the specific demands of Silverstone, which is characterised by sequences of high-speed, sweeping corners.

As well as focusing on aerodynamic fine-tuning, the team worked to optimise the settings of the updated hybrid powertrain whilst also getting important data on the 2017 Michelin tyres, in terms of endurance and performance.

The two TS050 HYBRIDs not only demonstrated speed, they also ran smoothly, completing a total of 146 laps, or 861km, during a very positive day's work for the team.

The next stage of preparation for Sunday's race takes place tomorrow, with final practice and qualifying, when TOYOTA will be fighting to earn its first pole position since its World Championship-winning 2014 season.

TS050 HYBRID #7 (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, José María López)

Free practice 1: 3rd (1min 40.960secs), 33 laps

Free practice 2: 2nd (1min 38.444secs), 37 laps

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It was a strong session for both cars and the pace looks quite good. It's hard to know what Porsche did so we will not get carried away. We did a lot of work. We still have things to do to get the car right for qualifying and the race but it's been a positive start. Compared to last year the car feels different, in a good way so I am happy with the start to our weekend."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It's great to start like this in terms of the lap times. I think we achieved something over the winter tests, a nice improvement compared to the 2016 car and the powertrain. It's not the race though, so we still have work to do to achieve our targets. We seem to have strong performance and the car feels nicely balanced, but we can improve. I feel quite optimistic."

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): "I am like a kid in a candy shop; I am really happy. It has been a long time since I first drove an LMP1 car. I really enjoyed it and I am very lucky that the car is competitive, which makes things easier. I have

been learning a lot, particularly in terms of traffic. The pressure is higher at a race weekend but I enjoyed every single lap so far."

TS050 HYBRID #8 (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)

Free practice 1: 1st (1min 40.104secs), 36 laps

Free practice 2: 1st (1min 38.210secs), 40 laps

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): "The day was obviously really good. It's nice to start the first Friday of the season like this with fastest laps in both free practices. However we don't want to be fastest in practice; we want to be fastest in the race. The car feels better compared to last year; thanks to the team for the big improvement. Now we try to make the most of it by analysing the data and fine-tuning the set-up."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8): "Today we ran without any problems with the car. I was happy with the balance generally and we didn't have to do much in terms of set-up changes. Most of the focus has been on the long runs as we are limited on tyres this year. We have found a good compromise on the car so I am happy. Now we wait to see what our competitors do tomorrow but I'm already looking forward to the race on Sunday."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It was a positive start to the weekend and I feel happy with the car. It feels strong and we can see a clear improvement of the powertrain and the chassis. Everything went smoothly so for the first race of the year it has been the ideal start. Performance-wise I don't know exactly where we are; it's still difficult to compare to Porsche but we are all happy on long or short runs which is positive."

Free practice 1 results:

1st	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 40.104secs	36 laps
2nd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.781secs	33 laps
3rd	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.856secs	33 laps
4th	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+1.231secs	39 laps
5th	#13 Rebellion (Beche/Hansson/Piquet)	+5.809secs	31 laps
6th	#28 TDS (Perrodo/Vaxiviere/Collard)	+6.034secs	38 laps

Free practice 2 results:

1st	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 38.210secs	40 laps
2nd	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.234secs	37 laps
3rd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+2.290secs	41 laps
4th	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+2.991secs	48 laps
5th	#26 G-Drive(Rusinov/Thiriet/Lynn)	+6.664secs	41 laps
6th	#36 Alpine (Lapierre/Menezes/Rao)	+6.796secs	32 laps

A German translation of this press release is available on www.RacingByTMG.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

DENSO

Mobil 1

ZENT

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AISIN

NIPPON STEEL & SUMITOMO METAL

RAYS

ADVICS

HAYASHI TELEMPU

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC

ETICS

TOYOTA INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

AICHI STEEL

TOYOTA AUTO BODY

TOYOTA TSUSHO

TOYOTA BOSHOKU

トヨタ東日本

TOYODA GOSEI

HINO

DAIHATSU

TOKAI RIKA

ばねの素

NPR

TAMACHI

FURUKAWA ELECTRIC GROUP

MAEDA

FINE SINTER

airweave

MICHELIN



RAISING THE EXCITEMENT TOYOTA HYBRID

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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