

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING: LE MANS 24 HOURS UPDATE 1

Saturday 17 June 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing leads the 85th Le Mans 24 Hours after the opening stages of the race on a very hot afternoon at the Circuit de la Sarthe.

The #7 TS050 HYBRID of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Stéphane Sarrazin, led the race after the first driver changes around 5.30pm, with the #8 of Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima in second.

Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto and José María López were running fifth in the #9 TS050 HYBRID.

With TOYOTA Motor Corporation President Akio Toyoda watching from the pit box, Mike led from the beginning with a clean start in the pole position #7, while Sébastien dropped back to third behind the #1 Porsche.

Nicolas suffered misfortune on lap one through no fault of his own. The #4 Bykolles suffered a problem and a piece of loose bodywork hit the right front of the TS050 HYBRID, compromising its aerodynamics. At the first pit stop, the front bodywork was changed at the cost of 10 seconds and Nicolas resumed in fifth.

When Mike pitted for the first time, he returned to the track just ahead of Sébastien. The two cars went side by side briefly and Sébastien put the #8 into the lead later in the lap.

Soon after the first hour, Mike returned to the lead by passing the #8 and stayed there through beyond the first driver changes, on the third pit stops.

The next phase of the race saw Kamui take over the #7, with Anthony in the #8 and José María completing his first racing laps at Le Mans in the #9.

TS050 HYBRID #7 (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, Stéphane Sarrazin)

Grid position: 1st

Mike Conway: "It was a good first stint. I was just basically controlling things, keeping up a steady pace and trying not to do anything silly. The track is quite dirty so you have to be careful not to get pick up; I had to learn that in the first stint. All in all, the car is good and we just keep chipping away."

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

Grid position: 2nd

Sébastien Buemi: "The stint was okay but we had a lot of yellow flags and slow zones. I tried to focus on my job as much as I could. It is the start of a long race so let's stay calm. The temperature is high so the tyres were moving around quite a lot. I am happy with how the car is, now let's see how it will evolve."

TS050 HYBRID #9 (Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto, José María López)

Grid position: 5th

Nicolas Lapierre: "It was a pity we lost a position at the start. The Bykolles touched something in front of me and a piece damaged our front end. So the first stint was really difficult with less downforce. The car was much better after we changed the front end and we were back to normal. It felt good and I could push."



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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 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 12 pole positions and won 13 races, finishing on the podium a total of 34 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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