

PROMISING PRACTICE FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 3 November 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing completed an encouraging opening day in China by setting the fastest lap time in practice for the 6 Hours of Shanghai, the penultimate round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

The #7 TS050 HYBRID of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López were quickest of all with their lap time in second practice, just 0.279secs slower than the 2016 pole position.

Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima, who won the previous race at Fuji Speedway in the #8 TS050 HYBRID, were second fastest as they seek a fourth victory of the season.

Today's schedule was rewritten just as first practice was expected to begin when a lack of radio communication between race control and marshals caused a 90-minute delay. Despite the delay, the session was not shortened so the team could eventually get to work on a busy programme of tyre and set-up comparisons.

Unlike the last race in Fuji, where wet weather made such evaluations very difficult, the weather was dry throughout allowing both cars to test a range of Michelin tyres, although air temperature did fall from 23°C to 17°C during the afternoon.

Shanghai International Circuit is particularly punishing on tyres and this creates a challenge due to 2017 regulations which require at least one set of tyres to be used for two stints during the race. Therefore it was important to establish a clear understanding of the performance and degradation of each specification of slick tyre.

A busy day also included fine-tuning of the hybrid boost and recovery settings to the specific demands of the 5.451km circuit, which features long straights and a variety of corners, from very slow hairpins at the beginning and end of the lap to faster, sweeping turns in the middle section.

The team will work hard to analyse the data from both 90-minute practice sessions and improve the cars, with a target of earning a fourth pole position and fourth win of 2017 in the eighth race of the season.

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

Free practice 1: 1st (1min 47.182secs), 35 laps

Free practice 2: 1st (1min 44.741secs), 39 laps

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It has been a decent first day. We have been continuously improving the car and working out which tyres to use. This circuit is very hard on tyres so that is an important point for us. We still have some homework to do in a few areas but it's been an encouraging day overall."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7): "We were on top in both sessions and it's a long time since we had a Friday like that. We have made a good step forward on our car and the lap times are strong. Of course, there is still more to come and we are working to find the best balance. It is only Friday but it's a good start."

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It's my first time in a TS050 HYBRID at this track so I have been trying to find the rhythm. It's nice to see the performance of our car here but Sunday is the day to deliver the result. So we will work hard tomorrow to stay on top; we have some very important set-up and tyre decisions to make."

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

Free practice 1: 4th (1min 47.929secs), 36 laps
 Free practice 2: 2nd (1min 45.131secs), 40 laps

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It is always nice to finish first and second. In general we have had a constructive day and made some improvements. It's going to be a tough fight, we know this, but we seem to be in the game which is positive. The difference will be in the details so we need to work hard on getting everything right."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It was great to be back in the car at this track, which I really enjoy. It was also nice to drive in the dry after all the rain in Fuji; I think everyone needed that. Our pace was okay compared to Porsche which is good news but we lacked a little compared to our sister car so we have to look into that."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8): "I did various tyre comparisons and we need to look at the data to work out which is the best option. We are missing a bit on our car; the balance didn't feel great for me today so we will try to get it right for qualifying and the race. That is obviously our main focus."

Free practice 1 results:

1st	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 47.182secs	35 laps
2nd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+0.232secs	35 laps
3rd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.455secs	34 laps
4th	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.747secs	36 laps
5th	#13 Rebellion (Beche/Heinemeier-Hansson/Piquet)	+5.351secs	36 laps
6th	#26 G-Drive (Rusinov/Roussel/Müller)	+5.972secs	36 laps

Free practice 2 results:

1st	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 44.741secs	39 laps
2nd	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.390secs	40 laps
3rd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.528secs	35 laps
4th	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+0.875secs	39 laps
5th	#13 Rebellion (Beche/Heinemeier-Hansson/Piquet)	+5.815secs	34 laps
6th	#38 Jackie Chan (Tung/Jarvis/Laurent)	+6.143secs	29 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 19 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 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 13 pole positions and won 14 races, finishing on the podium a total of 39 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.

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