

HOME WIN FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Sunday 16 October 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing earned its first victory of the season on home ground in an epic 6 Hours of Fuji, the seventh round of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

In front of an enthusiastic Japanese crowd, all three LMP1 manufacturers showed near identical pace, but the #6 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi came out on top after an enthralling battle.

The #6 crossed the line just 1.439secs ahead of the #8 Audi, bringing TOYOTA's 11th WEC win, its fourth in five years at Fuji and its first since Bahrain in November 2014. That result also lifts the #6 crew to second in the drivers' World Championship, 23 points off the lead.

Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima recorded their best result of a troubled season with fourth, within a minute of the winning sister car.

The tone for a tense and closely-fought race was set at the start. Kamui and Kazuki, having slipped to fourth and sixth respectively at turn one, fought back and at the first pit stops the #6 was running second while the #5 was fourth.

Fast work from the pit crew established the pattern for the race, with the #6, now with Mike the wheel, in a very close fight for the lead with the #8 Audi, while Anthony in the #5 was pushing for the podium.

As the race passed the half-distance point, there was no let up as all three LMP1 manufacturers ran flat-out for victory in a tense contest, which got even closer when the Porsche #1 joined the battle.

As the four-hour mark approached, less than two seconds covered the top three while the #5 was less than 30 seconds from the lead in fourth, with Kazuki pushing for the podium positions.

Stéphane enjoyed an exciting stint with wheel-to-wheel battles against the #8 Audi and #1 Porsche, all whilst coping with heavy traffic. When Kamui took over the #6 with just over 90 minutes remaining, he kept up the challenge, valiantly defending second place before targeting the leader.

The final stop for the #6 saw Kamui take only fuel, saving vital time and earning track position but requiring him to maintain the pace on older tyres. Kamui rose to the challenge during the tense final laps, with fine driving through the traffic. He crossed the line to win his first WEC race while Anthony took the flag shortly after in the #5.

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will return to action next month with the penultimate race of the 2016 season, the 6 Hours of Shanghai on 6 November.

Toshio Sato, Team President: "This was a very tense and exciting race between all three LMP1 manufacturers; it was a six-hour sprint race. We could do no more; everyone in the team performed to the maximum today against such close competition. It was a clean fight, decided by speed on track and in the pits as well as strategy. All credit to Audi and Porsche for their part in this great show. I would like to thank everyone in the team for their great job to perform so strongly in our home race, as well as our colleagues at Higashi-Fuji and Cologne who worked so hard for

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this. Thank you also to all the fans who came to support us at Fuji Speedway; as always we have enjoyed racing in front of our home crowd."

TS050 HYBRID #5 (Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima)
Race: 4th, 244 laps, 6 pit stops. Grid: 3rd. Fastest lap: 1min 25.377secs

Anthony Davidson: "That is a fantastic result for the team as a whole; to win on home soil is amazing and it keeps up our impressive record here at Fuji Speedway. Unfortunately for car #5 we couldn't quite match the other car and join the guys on the podium. I had fun while I was out there and it's always a pleasure to race in front of these fans. I hope they enjoyed a well-deserved victory for car #6."

Sébastien Buemi: "Congratulations to the team for this victory at our home track. The #6 crew drove a really good race and they deserved to win. It was the best result of the season for our car but we were not as strong as we wanted to be; we did our best but we just missed a bit. Still, for the team it's nice to be back to winning ways and this gives a lot of encouragement for the final two races."

Kazuki Nakajima: "First of all this is a great result for TOYOTA. It is the first victory in a while which is fantastic for everyone. For our car it was a difficult race especially in the beginning when we lost some time, mainly in traffic. After that we had good pace, similar to the leaders but not enough to close the gap. I am quite happy with the team's progress because we stepped up a level here. I am also really pleased for the Japanese fans, our TOYOTA colleagues and our sponsors; they saw a great race."

TS050 HYBRID #6 (Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi)
Race: 1st, 244 laps, 6 pit stops. Grid: 4th. Fastest lap: 1min 25.320secs

Stéphane Sarrazin: "It's an amazing result for us in our home race. After Le Mans this is the most important event for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing and we gave everything. It was an incredible race from the whole team; Mike did really well and Kamui was just flying. I had some traffic issues on my two stints so it wasn't perfect but overall we had the pace which is very positive. We hoped to be competitive here and I am so happy for my team and our fans with this result."

Mike Conway: "This feels really good. We came into the weekend feeling optimistic and thought we had a chance. In the race it was so close all the way through with barely a 10th of a second between the cars each lap. It was so tense and the last hour felt like six! Kamui was a star with the double stint at the end. We were not sure how it would go but he did really well. The team also did a brilliant job and made up time in the pits and with our strategy; that was a big part of this win today."

Kamui Kobayashi: "Everyone in the team performed so well; they really deserve this. After qualifying we had a positive feeling and we did everything to get a win in our home race. So to get this result in front of our local fans and our colleagues from TOYOTA makes us very happy; I would like to say thanks for their big support. Actually, it is still difficult to believe we did it; we worked so hard for this. It was a really tough race. The double stint at the end was a risk but we were only focused on the victory and now this feels great, just perfect."

6 Hours of Fuji results:

1st	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	244 laps
2nd	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+1.439secs
3rd	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+17.339secs
4th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+53.779secs

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5th #2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/Lieb) +1 lap
6th #13 Rebellion (Tuscher/Kraihamer/Imperatori) +15 laps

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing 2016 Results:

Silverstone: #5: Qualifying 6th; Race 16th / #6 Qualifying 5th; Race 2nd.
Spa: #5: Qualifying 5th; Race 26th / #6 Qualifying 3rd; Race DNF.
Le Mans: #5: Qualifying 4th; Race NC / #6 Qualifying 3rd; Race 2nd.
Nürburgring: #5: Qualifying 6th; Race 5th / #6 Qualifying 5th; Race 6th.
Mexico: #5: Qualifying 5th; Race DNF / #6 Qualifying 6th; Race 3rd.
COTA: #5: Qualifying 6th; Race 5th / #6 Qualifying 4th; Race 3rd.
Fuji: #5: Qualifying 3rd; Race 4th / #6 Qualifying 4th; Race 1st.

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 29 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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Media contact: Alastair Moffitt, Marketing & Communications Manager:
alastair.moffitt@toyota-motorsport.com

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