

PACE BRINGS A PODIUM FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Saturday 17 September 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing earned another podium finish after a strong performance in a closely-fought 6 Hours of Circuit of the Americas, the sixth round of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

The #6 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi finished third for their fourth podium of 2016, finishing just 26.096secs behind the winner after an exciting victory battle between all three LMP1 hybrid manufacturers.

Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima in the #5 suffered another unfortunate race, with several minor issues combining to keep it out of the podium fight, finishing in fifth.

The race had started promisingly for the #5, when Sébastien moved from sixth on the grid to fourth place during a charging first stint under blazing sunshine and with air temperatures over 35°C.

Mike took the start in the #6 and ran sixth during the opening stint before handing over to Kamui at the first pit stops. At the same time, great pit work on the #5 allowed Anthony to emerge in third, an issue on the wastegate of the turbo began to compromise performance and the #5 slipped to sixth by the 90-minute mark.

As darkness fell and the race reached half distance, the #5 lost more time when a damaged front end was changed after Kazuki's stint, then suffered again soon after when a rear left puncture forced an unplanned pit stop for Sébastien.

But the #6 was lapping very quickly and continuing to push the Porsches. Mike took fourth place before dramas for the #8 Audi helped Kamui, now at the wheel, to run third as the race entered its final two hours.

That became second, with the #5 also moving up a place when the #7 crashed as the close fight at the front began to take its toll. A three-way fight between three different manufacturers for victory developed in the final hour.

Stéphane took over from Kamui for the final stint in third place, with the Audi #8 not changing tyres during its last stop. Stéphane had fresh tyres and pushed to close the gap, with the race leader also not far away.

A fighting performance in the final laps saw the gap close, but second place was just out of reach, with Stéphane taking the chequered flag only 2.455secs behind the second-placed Audi #8 and 26.096secs behind the winning Porsche #1. Sébastien brought the #5 home two laps down in fifth.

TOYOTA will now travel with optimism to its home race, the 6 Hours of Fuji on 16 October, which takes place just a few kilometres from the Higashi-Fuji Technical Centre where the 1,000hp TOYOTA HYBRID System - Racing is developed and built.

Toshio Sato, Team President: "I am pleased with our performance here in Austin. We have focused all week on race pace and it paid off today because we showed strong performance. It was a great fight with Porsche and Audi all the way to the end of an exciting race. I am particularly proud of the job done by everyone in the team, especially considering how difficult it has been in this heat. Our quick pit stops and effective strategy helped to achieve a strong result. This has been a good step

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towards our home race at Fuji Speedway, where we want to give our Japanese fans and colleagues a result to enjoy.”

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

Race: 5th, 184 laps, 8 pit stops. Grid: 4th. Fastest lap: 1min 48.482secs

Anthony Davidson: “That was another disappointing day for car #5. It feels like we just keep getting bad luck. We had a technical issue which hindered our performance and seemed to get worse as the race progressed. We just had to keep fighting and do the best we could, which was fifth.”

Sébastien Buemi: “Congratulations to car #6; they had a strong race and another podium which is good. For us it was another tough race. We were up to third after the first stop and it looked good, but then we had some technical issues and we had no chance after that. Nothing is going our way at the moment but we will try to change this in the next race.”

Kazuki Nakajima: “It was a difficult race for us. We had many small issues and it just wasn’t possible to overcome that. So it was more bad luck for us in a tough season but that’s life; we just need to get on and keep pushing. It’s our home race next so we will pick ourselves up and fight for a good result.”

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

Race: 3rd, 186 laps, 7 pit stops. Grid: 4th. Fastest lap: 1min 48.544secs

Stéphane Sarrazin: “It was an incredible race. Kamui, Mike and me did a strong job and the team gave us a good car. Our pace just got better through the race and the last hour was incredible. We were really competitive today. Audi have been so fast this weekend so to be so close is a positive sign. Now we keep pushing for our home race.”

Mike Conway: “I’m very happy to be on the podium again, for the fourth time this season. Our car came alive halfway through the race when we had strong pace. It was nice to see the pace we could get out of the car today. Stéphane and Kamui did a great job and the mechanics as well were really good in such tough conditions.”

Kamui Kobayashi: “I am pleased with our performance. We closed the gap to Audi and Porsche at the end and were part of an exciting race. I appreciate the job from the mechanics who did great pit stops and thanks to the whole team for helping us to be on the podium for the second race in a row; we had absolutely no mistakes.”

6 Hours of Circuit of the Americas results:

1st	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	186 laps
2nd	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+23.641secs
3rd	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+26.096secs
4th	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/Lieb)	+1 lap
5th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+2 laps
6th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+6 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.

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RAISING THE EXCITEMENT
TOYOTA HYBRID

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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 10 races, finishing on the podium a total of 27 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.

www.toyota-motorsport.com / [@Toyota Hybrid](https://www.facebook.com/toyotamotorsport)

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