

TEXAS TRIP FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Monday 12 September 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing heads to Texas this weekend for the second North American trip in short succession, the 6 Hours of Circuit of the Americas.

Following the event in Mexico City two weeks ago, the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) travels 1,500km north to the city of Austin for round six of the 2016 season on Saturday 17 September.

Another podium finish is the target, following a competitive showing in Mexico which saw the #6 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi take third place and move into second in the drivers' World Championship.

The team will be back to full strength again, with Anthony Davidson returning after he missed the last race due to bruised ribs. He joins Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima in the #5, which did not finish in Mexico due to a technical issue.

As in Nürburgring and Mexico, the TS050 HYBRIDs will again use the ultra-high-downforce aerodynamic package which showed strong race pace last time out in changing weather conditions.

The 5.513km Circuit of the Americas, located 19km south of Austin, is a firm favourite among drivers thanks to its unique design, which is a perfect showcase for the high-speed, high-grip LMP1 cars.

Weather conditions are a talking point, with temperatures above 30°C creating a challenging environment for drivers and pit crew, who must wear fireproof overalls during all sessions. As well as heat, thunder storms have previously disrupted the event, notably in 2014 when a race-day downpour caused chaos.

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing has finished on the podium in all but two races this season and will aim to do so again by fighting at the front of the field with its competitors Audi and Porsche.

Work towards that goal will begin on Thursday with two 90-minute practice sessions before final practice and qualifying on Friday. Saturday's race begins at 17.00 local time, meaning fans can enjoy the spectacle of LMP1 cars racing into the night.

Toshio Sato, Team President: "We are looking forward to visiting Austin again. Some of the team members stayed in North America after Mexico so we will arrive at the track fresh and ready for action. It was satisfying to get back on the podium in our last race, but I was even more pleased with our competitive performance. We have worked hard on our ultra-high-downforce package and I think we are now seeing the positive results. We made a reasonable start to the overseas races with our result in Mexico, so I look forward to another fight at the front this weekend."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #5): "Austin is a fantastic track and it's a real challenge. You have high-speed, fast-flowing corners, a big elevation change, and some very technical, tight corners. It's a great combination and I haven't met a driver yet who doesn't like it. The only downside for a driver is the extreme heat and humidity. I'm happy to be back in the car again. Of course it was frustrating to sit out Mexico but it was the right thing to do and it means I am in good shape for Austin."

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #5): "Even though Mexico was not a good race for car #5 there were positive signs and I am looking forward to Austin. We showed

that we had pace in the race and we were relatively competitive with the Audis and Porsches. I think Austin should suit our car better due to the characteristics of the circuit so I am pretty optimistic. I think it's going to be a tight fight; hopefully we can have a strong performance there and a clean race."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #5): "I really enjoy driving at this track; it's great fun. The first part is very high speed and you need a good rhythm through the corners, which I enjoy. It's usually very hot when we race there and I experienced this last year for the first time. We have extra cooling for the driver which helps but it's still pretty hot so we have to be in good shape. I'm looking forward to going back there and I hope we can get a strong result."

Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #6): "I can't wait to race in Austin after our performance in Mexico. The whole package feels stronger now and I think we can fight at the front. I know the team has worked really hard to get back to this position with the ultra-high-downforce package and I appreciate that effort. It will not be easy in Austin but we will give our all to prepare the best possible car for the race and, like in Mexico, we will not stop pushing."

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #6): "Austin is one of my favourite circuits on the calendar. It's a great lay-out that makes for fun racing, as well because traffic management is difficult in places. Austin is also a fantastic city and I love going there. I will spend some days in Arizona before this event, training in the heat to get acclimatised. So I'll arrive well prepared and really motivated to get another positive result for the team; I hope we can stand on the podium again."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #6): "I am looking forward to drive the track for the first time in an LMP1 car. I have raced there before in Formula 1 so I know it's a fun track to drive; it will be interesting to see how the TS050 HYBRID performs there. One big difference will be the heat because in F1 we raced there later in the year so it was cooler and we also had an open cockpit. My team-mates tell me that with a closed car it will be pretty hot, but we're all fit so I'm not worried."

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in 6 Hours of COTA:

- 2013** #8: Qualifying 3rd; Race 2nd.
- 2014** #7: Qualifying 5th; Race 6th. #8: Qualifying 1st; Race 3rd.
- 2015** #1: Qualifying 5th; Race 4th. #2: Qualifying 6th; Race DNF.

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 and including the 2016 edition, TOYOTA cars have raced in 18 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on five occasions (1992, 1994, 1999, 2013 and 2016). 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



RAISING THE EXCITEMENT TOYOTA HYBRID

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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