

THIRD ROW IN MEXICO FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 2 September 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will start the fifth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) from the third row of the grid after qualifying for the 6 Hours of Mexico.

Kazuki Nakajima and Sébastien Buemi qualified their #5 TS050 HYBRID in fifth position, one place ahead of the #6 of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi.

The #6 car faced a challenging day of catch-up following an accident in Thursday testing which required a monocoque change. Having worked into the early hours of the morning, the mechanics had the car ready for the beginning of third practice.

There were issues for the #5 crew too on Thursday, with Anthony Davidson unable to participate as he concludes his recovery from bruised ribs, leaving Sébastien and Kazuki to share the driving for the remainder of the weekend.

In qualifying, Kazuki took the wheel first before handing over to Sébastien, with both drivers completing two flying laps, finishing 0.891secs behind the pole-position-winning Audi #8.

Mike and Kamui took qualifying duties in the sister car, with Mike only recording one flying lap while Kamui drove two. Unusually, Stéphane also took part, although he was not a nominated qualifier. He took the chance to get more experience of the circuit after the #6 missed both free practices on Thursday.

Despite a gap to Audi and Porsche over one lap today, TOYOTA hopes to be part of an exciting race on Saturday, when the threat of rain could be a factor.

TS050 HYBRID #5 (Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima)

Free practice 3: 6th (1min 26.788secs), 34 laps

Qualifying: 5th (1min 25.960secs average)

Sébastien Buemi: "It's a small track with a lot of cars so it wasn't easy with traffic. We could have been a bit quicker but not enough to fight for a better position. We are behind, we see that, but we are not miles behind; normally we have better pace in the race than in qualifying. It's not going to be easy but we might have an opportunity. I am quite happy with how it went today and now we will work hard for a good result."

Kazuki Nakajima: "I lost a bit of time in the last sector of my first lap so we need to look into what happened. Generally the car felt okay; it was just difficult to put everything together for one lap. We are ready for the race, which is going to be long and tricky in terms of the traffic, especially with the walls being quite close. We need to have a clean race as that can give us a chance. We will certainly keep fighting."

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

Free practice 3: 5th (1min 26.448secs). 28 laps

Qualifying: 6th (1min 26.149secs average)

Stéphane Sarrazin: "I also drove in qualifying even though Mike and Kamui were the nominated qualifiers because I haven't done so many laps here in Mexico. I could only do two laps this morning so I needed to get more experience on this track. I did another three laps which helps me as that's almost double what I had done before."

Mike Conway: "We have not done many laps this weekend in our car so it was a case of getting as much as we could out of qualifying. Maybe I could have gone quicker with another lap but it wouldn't change much. We did okay considering what happened; big thanks to the crew who had a long, hard night to repair the car. I hope we can give them a reward in the race."

Kamui Kobayashi: "I think we had difficult day yesterday but we managed to qualify relatively close to our sister car which is good. We started to get a better feeling for the car on this track. Obviously we didn't have enough time to get a perfect set-up but I think we managed well in such a short time. Now we will see for tomorrow."

Free practice 3 results:

1st	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	1min 25.387secs	29 laps
2nd	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+0.118secs	32 laps
3rd	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+0.286secs	37 laps
4th	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/Lieb)	+0.460secs	30 laps
5th	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.016secs	28 laps
6th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.401secs	34 laps

Qualifying results:

1st	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	1min 25.069secs
2nd	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	+0.042secs
3rd	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+0.281secs
4th	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+0.331secs
5th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.891secs
6th	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.114secs

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 10 races, finishing on the podium a total of 26 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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