

LE MANS CALLING FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 10 June 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing is prepared and positive ahead of the 84th running of the legendary Le Mans 24 Hours, the highlight of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season.

TOYOTA enters Le Mans for the 18th time, having made its debut in 1985, and travels to France looking for its fifth podium finish at the Circuit de la Sarthe, having recorded a best result of second four times.

In the driving seat of the #5 TS050 HYBRID will be 2014 World Champions Anthony Davidson and Sébastien Buemi joined by Kazuki Nakajima, who set the pole position time at Le Mans two years ago. The #6 car features three-time Le Mans pole winner Stéphane Sarrazin alongside Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi.

The battle with former winners Audi and Porsche sees the new-for-2016 TS050 HYBRID compete at Le Mans for the first time. The 1,000hp prototype has been optimised specifically for this race and features significant upgrades compared to the TS040 HYBRIDs which finished sixth and eighth last year.

Intense development of the new 2.4litre, V6 turbo engine at Higashi-Fuji technical centre in Japan has delivered an efficient and powerful powertrain when combined with the battery-based 8MJ hybrid system.

In parallel, a new chassis has been developed for 2016 at TOYOTA Motorsport GmbH in Cologne, with almost all parts redesigned and optimised for weight and performance. A low downforce aerodynamic package will make its race debut at Le Mans following a successful test at the Circuit de la Sarthe last weekend.

TOYOTA travels to Le Mans determined to build on the race-winning pace shown in the last WEC race at Spa-Francorchamps, where the TS050 HYBRIDs looked on course for victory until engine problems struck. Thorough investigation of the data has established that the issue was specific to the Spa circuit, caused by the car 'bottoming' through the undulating Eau Rouge corner.

Despite the disappointing end result in Belgium, the overall speed of the TS050 HYBRIDs has raised the team's hopes for Le Mans, where it expects to challenge at the front, inspired by the goal of winning the race for the first time.

The official test on 5 June raised hopes of a closely-fought race. The fastest TS050 HYBRID recorded a lap 2.124secs faster than the best TOYOTA time from the 2015 test, despite a 7.5% reduction of fuel consumption required by regulations. Both cars demonstrated reliability, completing a total of 177 laps, 2412km.

Endurance is equally important as performance at Le Mans, which features almost 35 hours of driving until the chequered flag waves, starting on Wednesday 15 June with a four-hour practice session at 16.00 before 120 minutes of qualifying begin at 22.00.

Qualifying continues on Thursday with another pair of two-hour sessions (19.00 & 22.00). The starting grid is decided by the fastest single lap from any of the qualifying sessions.

The traditional drivers' parade in the city centre on Friday afternoon gives fans a unique chance to get up close to the drivers before race weekend, which begins with a 45-minute warm-up at 09.00. The race starts at 15.00 on Saturday.

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Toshio Sato, Team President: "Le Mans is the highlight of our year and it has been the focus of most of our hard work in pre-season. We were able to confirm the strong potential of the car in Spa and based on this, and the fact we have developed our TS050 HYBRID particularly with Le Mans in mind, I am excited to see how it performs. But this race is about much more than the car itself; it is a very demanding race for the whole team, including the drivers. In such difficult conditions it is important to give our best possible performance and avoid mistakes; then we will see what result we can achieve. Of course, our ultimate target, like all the LMP1 manufacturers, is to win and we are ready to fight. We will approach this goal at the end of this long race by working with maximum determination and concentration for the entire 24 hours."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #5): "I can't wait to get the whole process of the Le Mans 24 Hours underway once again this year. It's the one race we drivers all want to win and it's what we work towards during the hard winter months of testing. It is such a special event and I have been lucky enough to stand on the podium twice and that's an experience you never forget. It's fair to say it has been a challenging start to the year for car #5, particularly the last race at Spa when we were on our way to the win until a technical problem, but that only makes me even more determined for Le Mans. There's no better place to turn around our season."

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #5): "I am really motivated for Le Mans as usual. It is a fantastic track and it's always amazing to be there for race week. Unfortunately it only happens once a year so you really need to soak up the atmosphere and enjoy this special event. We had a positive test day with our new TS050 HYBRID, which is a big step forward compared to last year's car, so I think we can be in the fight this year. The car feels good and we have seen at Spa that we are able to compete at the front. There's still a lot of work to do in practice and qualifying to get the most out of our car, but the first signs are positive."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #5): "Le Mans is an impressive event. I remember the first time I raced there in 2012, the scale of the race and the atmosphere, especially before the start, was unbelievably exciting. It was something I had never experienced in motorsport. I remember watching the race on TV, especially in 1998 and 1999 when the TOYOTA TS020 raced, so to experience it myself is always special. I very much enjoy the circuit, which is really challenging for a driver. The cars reach high top speeds on the long Hunaudières straight and there are many fast corners so it's really fun to drive. I'm ready and looking forward to the week."

Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #6): "This race is just amazing; a special event on a special track. It is the longest circuit of the season with the most history and as a French driver it's a great experience. We work all year to be in good shape for Le Mans. When we are doing 30-hour endurance tests, it is to be ready for this race. This year we are more a challenger than favourite but maybe that's a good position to be in. We took a big step with the TS050 HYBRID; the car is really competitive and we showed at Spa that we can lead a race and challenge for victory. I think it will be an exciting race this year and I am confident we can fight."

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #6): "We approach Le Mans with a lot of anticipation this year. It is a magical event with all its history and it's the one race you focus on at the start of every year; it comes around very quickly. There are more unknowns this year and we are eager to know exactly where we stand. Even after all the thousands of kilometres we've done already, until we do long stints in practice and then flat-out qualifying runs, we don't know exactly how we compare. The performance steps from all the LMP1 manufacturers have been really impressive in

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the last year or so. We know we are close; we will find out where we stand very soon."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #6): "We all enjoy this event and look forward to it from the start of the year. I was surprised when I first drove this track because the lay-out is fantastic and compared to other street circuits the surface is relatively smooth, with good grip. The Le Mans 24 Hours is a truly world-famous race so to be competing there makes me proud. There are a lot of races in the world, and I've raced on many tracks, but Le Mans really stands out. It would be amazing to win the race as a Japanese driver in a Japanese team, especially in my first Le Mans with TOYOTA. Probably we are not the favourites this year but we are close and I think we can challenge."

TOYOTA at Le Mans:

(Chassis name in brackets)

- 1985** #36 (85C-L): Qualifying 29th; Race 12th. #38 (85C-L): Qualifying 22nd; Race DNF (mechanical).
- 1986** #36 (86C-L): Qualifying 40th; Race DNF (mechanical). #38 (86C-L): Qualifying 30th; Race 20th.
- 1987** #36 (87C-L): Qualifying 14th; Race DNF (mechanical). #37 (87C-L): Qualifying 16th; Race DNF (mechanical).
- 1988** #36 (88C): Qualifying 8th; Race 12th. #37 (88C): Qualifying 10th; Race 24th.
- 1989** #36 (89C-V): Qualifying 24th; Race DNF (mechanical). #37 (89C-V): Qualifying 17th; Race DNF (accident). #38 (88C): Qualifying 25th; Race DNF (accident).
- 1990** #36 (90C-V): Qualifying 10th; Race 6th. #37 (90C-V): Qualifying 14th; Race DNF (accident). #38 (90C-V): Qualifying 16th; Race DNF (mechanical).
- 1992** #7 (TS010): Qualifying 3rd; Race DNF (mechanical). #8 (TS010): Qualifying 4th; Race 8th. #33 (TS010): Qualifying 5th; Race 2nd. #34 (92C-V): Qualifying 11th; Race 9th. #35 (92C-V): Qualifying 15th; Race 5th.
- 1993** #22 (93C-V): Qualifying 10th; Race 5th. #25 (93C-V): Qualifying 12th; Race 6th. #36 (TS010): Qualifying 2nd; Race 4th. #37 (TS010): Qualifying 5th; Race DNF (mechanical). #38 (TS010): Qualifying 4th; Race 8th.
- 1994** #1 (94 C-V): Qualifying 4th; Race 2nd. #4 (94 C-V): Qualifying 8th; Race 4th.
- 1995** #27 (Supra LM): Qualifying 30th; Race 14th.
- 1996** #57 (Supra LM): Qualifying 36th; Race DNF (accident).
- 1998** #27 (TS020): Qualifying 8th; Race 9th. #28 (TS020): Qualifying 2nd; Race DNF (accident). #29 (TS020): Qualifying 7th; Race DNF (mechanical)
- 1999** #1 (TS020): Qualifying 1st; Race DNF (accident). #2 (TS020): Qualifying 2nd; Race DNF (accident). #3 (TS020): Qualifying 8th; Race 2nd.
- 2012** #7 (TS030 HYBRID): Qualifying 5th; Race DNF (mechanical). #8 (TS030 HYBRID): Qualifying: 3rd; Race DNF (accident).
- 2013** #7 (TS030 HYBRID): Qualifying 5th; Race 4th. #8: Qualifying (TS030 HYBRID): 4th; Race 2nd.
- 2014** #7 (TS040 HYBRID): Qualifying 1st; Race DNF (mechanical). #8 (TS040 HYBRID): Qualifying: 3rd; Race 3rd.
- 2015** #1 (TS040 HYBRID): Qualifying 8th; Race 8th. #2 (TS040 HYBRID): Qualifying: 7th; Race 6th.

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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 17 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on four occasions (1992, 1994, 1999 and 2013). 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 25 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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