

POSITIVE PRACTICE FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Thursday 5 May 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing made an encouraging start to practice for the second round of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium.

TOYOTA arrives at the WEC 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps leading the manufacturers' World Championship after being the only LMP1 Hybrid team to record a two-car finish in the season-opener at Silverstone.

But the team was determined to improve performance for round two in order to fight for victory, and the early signs were positive in today's two 90-minute practice sessions.

The #6 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi set the fastest lap time in second practice, 0.155secs quicker than the #5 of Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima in second. Earlier the two cars had been respectively third and fifth in the opening session.

Unlike at Silverstone last month, where rain and snow interrupted preparations, practice at Spa took place in warm, sunny conditions which allowed the team the ideal opportunity to work on set-up and tyres.

The priority was to optimise the control settings and set-ups to get the maximum performance out of the new TS050 HYBRID, whilst also understanding the behaviour of the various specifications of Michelin tyres.

A test at Motorland Aragon after Silverstone gave the team additional data to improve performance and this progress was validated today. The two cars completed 103 laps, covering 721km despite second practice ending early due to an accident for a GT car.

But the team is focused on extracting even more performance from the TS050 HYBRID in third practice prior to Friday's qualifying session and Saturday's race.

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

Free practice 1: 5th (2min 00.053secs), 30 laps

Free practice 2: 2nd (1min 58.711secs), 27 laps

Anthony Davidson: "It's been a productive day and the car has been performing better than it did at Silverstone. The more we learn about it, the faster it gets. It's really nice to end second practice on top; it's a good morale boost for everyone. I feel optimistic already that we are going to be in a fight in the race. That's what we want; it's why we are here."

Sébastien Buemi: "I didn't do a lot of laps today and only one in the second session. But overall the situation looks encouraging for us. We will wait until tomorrow to see where we stand after qualifying but it looks much better than it did one year ago."

Kazuki Nakajima: "It's been a positive day for us. We found a good direction for the set-up and it went well generally. The lap times were quite impressive. It has been a long time to see our cars at the top of the timing sheets, so that was nice after second practice. I hope this is a good sign for the rest of the weekend."

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

Free practice 1: 3rd (1min 59.429secs), 27 laps

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ADVICS

RAYS

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HINO

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Free practice 2: 1st (1min 58.556secs), 19 laps

Stéphane Sarrazin: "We are stronger than we were at Silverstone; we have taken a good step but it's too early to get carried away. The aerodynamic package seems to work well at this track and we found a nice balance. We still need to improve in some areas but it was a good day. Even if it's only free practice, to be first and second in FP2 is a nice improvement but let's see for the rest of the weekend."

Mike Conway: "Our car was in the top three all day and set some good lap times. We started with a decent balance and we've just been improving as the day goes on, releasing more potential. We still need to work on the race balance but we came here with a good strategy and hopefully it will work out for the race, that's the main thing."

Kamui Kobayashi: "I drove only in the morning and it went well. It's a great feeling to drive the TS050 HYBRID around this circuit; the power and the hybrid boost were really impressive. There are a lot of high-speed corners here and the car felt really good. We are in quite a good position I think today so we can be positive."

Free practice 1 results:

1st	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	1min 58.012secs	30 laps
2nd	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	+0.565secs	23 laps
3rd	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.417secs	27 laps
4th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+1.971secs	33 laps
5th	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+2.041secs	30 laps
6th	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+2.428secs	11 laps

Free practice 2 results:

1st	#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 58.556secs	19 laps
2nd	#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.155secs	27 laps
3rd	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+0.620secs	29 laps
4th	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	+1.045secs	24 laps
5th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+1.743secs	23 laps
6th	#12 Rebellion (Prost/Piquet/Heidfeld)	+6.294secs	21 laps

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 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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