

## STRONG START AT SPA FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Thursday 4 May 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing completed a busy and positive first day by setting the fastest lap time in practice for the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, the second round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi will share the #7 car alone this weekend due to the absence of José María López, who is recovering from his Silverstone accident. They set the fastest time in both 90-minute practice sessions.

Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima, in the #8 TS050 HYBRID, lead the World Championship following their victory in round one at Silverstone. They recorded the fourth fastest lap time in each session.

This week marks the first time that TOYOTA enters three cars in WEC, with the #9 TS050 HYBRID of Stéphane Sarrazin, Yuji Kunimoto and Nicolas Lapierre making its season debut in Belgium in preparation for their Le Mans 24 Hours challenge.

The trio built on the progress already shown in testing and were fifth quickest both times. Although Stéphane and Nicolas are highly experienced at Spa, today was the first time for Yuji to drive at the iconic 7.004km circuit. The Super Formula champion spent the two sessions learning the Spa lay-out and the specific demands of WEC.

It is a week of new challenges for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing, with the low-downforce aerodynamic configuration in use for the first time. The #9 crew will use this specification all weekend as part of the team's Le Mans preparations.

Therefore it was important to take advantage of today's three hours of practice to fine-tune the set-up in a competitive environment, whilst also comparing the low-downforce car with the high-downforce version used by the #7 and #8 crews.

Weather conditions were relatively kind to all participants; despite heavy showers on Wednesday, today's sessions took place on a dry track, albeit with low ambient temperatures around 11°C.

A productive day saw the three TS050 HYBRIDs complete a total of 178 laps, 1,246km, despite several red flags caused by other cars. The team is satisfied with progress so far on all three cars and looks forward to resuming a close battle with Porsche following the exciting Silverstone race.

### TS050 HYBRID #7 (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi)

Free practice 1: 1st (1min 57.940secs), 31 laps

Free practice 2: 1st (1min 56.369secs), 25 laps

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "We were quickest in both sessions so it looks positive. But Porsche is not far behind so it is a close fight. We are still trying to optimise the race set-up so there is still work to do, but we made a positive start. It has been productive and we got a lot of data. It's a pity we lost a bit of track time due to a few red flags but it's the same for everyone."

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "It is always nice to set the fastest lap in practice but that is not the main target today. With all cars we want to find the best set-up for the race. We made a good start and I am confident we will find more performance when we study the data. We know it will be a tough battle against Porsche so we have to work really hard to be ready for the race."

**TS050 HYBRID #8** (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)  
Free practice 1: 4th (1min 58.914secs), 31 laps  
Free practice 2: 4th (1min 57.917secs), 29 laps

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It was a normal practice day for us. We did a lot of laps and had no problem with the weather, even though we were expecting rain. As always we have a lot of data to look at. We will study what worked best and try to get the most out of the car for Friday and Saturday. It feels good here, better than last year. Now we need to see if it is enough."

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It was unexpectedly dry in both sessions but unfortunately I caught a few red flags so I had limited running, especially in second practice where I only had one clear lap. The car feels okay, particularly in terms of race balance. We still need to decide which tyre option suits us best so we have some data-crunching to do tonight."

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "I enjoyed driving again here; I like Spa a lot. We had a productive day; now we just need to put it all together and find out where we stand. We learned a lot about the different tyre options and worked on various set-ups. The car feels nice, particularly with the grip coming from the high-downforce package. Our job now is to find the best solution for the race."

**TS050 HYBRID #9** (Stéphane Sarrazin, Yuji Kunimoto, Nicolas Lapierre)  
Free practice 1: 5th (1min 59.633secs), 32 laps  
Free practice 2: 5th (1min 58.494secs), 30 laps

**Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "The car feels strong. We worked on the race set-up today. Nico and Yuji did a good job and we constantly improved the car. I am quite happy with how it has gone so far. In the race the track will come to our low-downforce car as the rubber goes down. It will be a good battle and I hope we have the pace to fight."

**Yuji Kunimoto (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "That was my first time to drive this circuit and I enjoyed it a lot; it is a fun track, especially in this car. But I have to learn a lot of things before the race. I am focused on improving step by step and getting the most out of the car around Spa. It's nice to work with Stéphane and Nicolas, as well as the other drivers; they are helping me a lot."

**Nicolas Lapierre (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "It was great to be back in the car here at Spa. It is one of the best tracks for LMP1 cars so it was exciting for me. We need to learn a bit more about the low-downforce package so we can adapt a bit and find the right settings. By the end of today's practice we found a good base so we are looking forward to the rest of the weekend."

**Free practice 1 results:**

<b>1st</b>	<b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>1min 57.940secs</b>	<b>31 laps</b>
2nd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.036secs	34 laps
3rd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+0.929secs	35 laps
<b>4th</b>	<b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+0.974secs</b>	<b>31 laps</b>
<b>5th</b>	<b>#9 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.693secs</b>	<b>32 laps</b>
6th	#36 Alpine (Dumas/Menezes/Rao)	+6.231secs	26 laps

**Free practice 2 results:**

<b>1st</b>	<b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>1min 56.369secs</b>	<b>25 laps</b>
2nd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.505secs	30 laps

**DENSO**

**Mobil 1**

**ZENT**

**AW**  
AISIN AW

**JTEKT**

**AISIN**

**NIPPON STEEL & SUMITOMO METAL**

**RAYS**

**ADVICS**

**HAYASHI TELEMU**

**MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC**

**ETICS**

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**TOYODA GOSEI**

**HINO**

**DAIHATSU**

**TOKAI RIKI**

**ぼねの 索郷**

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NIPPON PISTON RING CO. LTD.

**TAMACHI**

**FURUKAWA ELECTRIC GROUP**

**MAEDA**  
G-BELL SERVICE / GADON

**FINE SINTER**

**airweave**

**MICHELIN**



# RAISING THE EXCITEMENT TOYOTA HYBRID

3rd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+0.676secs	31 laps
4th	<b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.548secs</b>	<b>29 laps</b>
5th	<b>#9 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+2.125secs</b>	<b>30 laps</b>
6th	#24 Manor (Graves/Hirschi/Vergne)	+6.293secs	25 laps

A German translation of this press release is available on [www.RacingByTMG.com](http://www.RacingByTMG.com). High-resolution copyright-free photos are available for editorial use at [www.toyota-motorsport-photos.com](http://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 11 pole positions and won 12 races, finishing on the podium a total of 32 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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