



RAISING THE EXCITEMENT  
**TOYOTA HYBRID**

**RECORD LE MANS POLE FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING**

Thursday 15 June 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will start the 85th Le Mans 24 Hours from pole position after setting the fastest-ever lap of the Circuit de la Sarthe in the final qualifying sessions on Thursday evening.

Kamui Kobayashi became the second Japanese driver to earn pole position with a lap of 3mins 14.791secs at 8.14pm during second qualifying in the #7 TS050 HYBRID he shares with Mike Conway and Stéphane Sarrazin for an average speed of 251.9km/h.

That was 2.096secs quicker than the previous lap record on the current lay-out while the average speed was faster than for any previous lap in the 94-year history of the event, beating the 251.815km/h set by Hans-Joachim Stuck in a Porsche in 1985.

TOYOTA has started from pole position twice before at Le Mans, in 1999 with Martin Brundle and in 2014 with Kazuki Nakajima. It is TOYOTA's 12th in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) since its debut in 2012.

It will be an all-TOYOTA front row, with the World Championship-leading #8 TS050 HYBRID of Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki starting from second. Kazuki set the quickest lap from the three qualifying sessions, in third qualifying.

The day started with frustration for the #8 with Sébastien hitting trouble on his first lap. The car required a precautionary engine change due to an oil supply issue and missed second qualifying.

The #9 TS050 HYBRID of Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto and José María López will start the race from fifth after Nicolas set the fastest lap early in third qualifying.

There is no track action on Friday in order to give teams time to prepare the cars properly for the race. As well as the team, the drivers are also busy, with the traditional parade through the city centre. A 45-minute warm-up on Saturday morning is the final preparation before the race, which starts at 3pm local time.

**TS050 HYBRID #7** (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, Stéphane Sarrazin)

Qualifying 1: 1st (3min 18.793secs), 26 laps

Qualifying 2: 1st (3min 14.791secs), 6 laps

Qualifying 3: 4th (3min 19.928secs), 28 laps

Grid position: 1st

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "That was a mega lap by Kamui; everything worked perfectly. We were all watching as it unfolded and we could see it was going to be quick. When we saw he got a 3mins 14secs we were amazed. But Kamui has been flying all week so we were confident he could do it."

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "A big thanks to the team for this result. I got in the car with 100% confidence and when you are confident, you are quick. It was an amazing lap and the car was brilliant. It was the right moment, just after the red flag with no traffic. I am really proud of this pole position. Still, it is a 24-hour race so the important thing is the race result and that is what we are focusing on."

**Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "Kamui has been so quick all season and he was really, really fast again. It is an impressive job from the team to prepare a car capable of setting a new lap record here, so thank you to everyone. It's great to

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start from pole position but that is only a small target; the main target is still to come."

**TS050 HYBRID #8** (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)  
Qualifying 1: 2nd (3min 19.431secs), 26 laps  
Qualifying 2: No lap time, 2 laps  
Qualifying 3: 1st (3min 17.128secs), 32 laps  
Grid position: 2nd

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It is a great day for TOYOTA; congratulations to car #7 and Kamui. To set a new record like that is very impressive. The team did a very good job and I am really happy for the overall result. It wasn't a smooth day for us so to still qualify second is a good starting point for the race."

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It didn't start well for our car with the engine change in second qualifying. That was disappointing but we got second place after concentrating mainly on race pace. It is fantastic to see the team on pole position and an all-TOYOTA front row. Big congratulations to Kamui and the #7 guys."

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It was a good day, with much better track conditions. We didn't quite get it right on the qualifying attempt but still we finished second and are part of a brilliant result for the team. We are happy with the balance in race trim so we have a strong basis to take into the race."

**TS050 HYBRID #9** (Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto, José María López)  
Qualifying 1: 4th (3min 19.958secs), 27 laps  
Qualifying 2: 4th (3min 19.889secs), 5 laps  
Qualifying 3: 3rd (3min 18.625secs), 31 laps  
Grid position: 5th

**Nicolas Lapierre (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "It was a bit frustrating for us because I think we had the pace to do much better but I was caught in traffic on my first qualifying attempt, then we focused on race preparation. I think we could have been up with the others but overall I am very happy for the team."

**Yuji Kunimoto (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "Well done to Kamui and the team for this result. It was a bit difficult for us in qualifying but Nicolas drove well. Unfortunately he had a lot of traffic on his lap so we didn't see the full potential of our car. My laps went well and I feel I am constantly making progress. We have a strong car."

**José María López (TS050 HYBRID #9):** "The whole team did a good job and I'm really happy for everyone for the pole position; it's a reward for their hard work. I got used more to the car and the track, especially with the traffic. Now the most important thing is the race. The main focus is Sunday 3pm."

**Combined Qualifying Results:**

<b>1st</b>	<b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>3min 14.791secs</b>
<b>2nd</b>	<b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+2.337secs</b>
3rd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+2.468secs
4th	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+3.276secs
<b>5th</b>	<b>#9 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+3.834secs</b>
6th	#4 Bykolles (Webb/Kraihamer/Bonanomi)	+9.379secs

A pre-race press conference will take place on Friday 16 June at 13.00 at the TOYOTA hospitality suite in the Parc du Raccordement. All accredited media are invited.



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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 12 pole positions and won 13 races, finishing on the podium a total of 34 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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