

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING HEADS HOME

Monday 9 October 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing is targeting a return to winning ways when it competes on home ground this weekend in the 6 Hours of Fuji, the seventh round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

TOYOTA has dominated the Japanese round of WEC since it returned to top-level endurance racing in 2012, winning four of the five races held at the spectacular Fuji Speedway in the shadow of Mount Fuji.

Following a close and exciting challenge for victory last time out in Austin, the team is determined to add to its two wins this season in front of the usually large and passionate home crowd.

Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi won the race last year and will target a repeat result alongside José María López in the #7 TS050 HYBRID. Anthony Davidson returns from a one-off absence to join Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima in the #8 car.

Fuji Speedway is a home race for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing not only as the sole Japanese round in the calendar; the TS050 HYBRID's 1,000hp hybrid powertrain is developed and built just a few kilometres from the track, at Higashi-Fuji Technical Centre.

That means the on-track team benefits from significant moral support from colleagues who are not normally able to visit the circuit, beginning early in the week with visits from drivers and team management to Higashi-Fuji and other key partners.

Fuji Speedway, located around 110km from central Tokyo, has evolved significantly since its opening in 1965, when a fearsome banked oval section began at the first corner and made up half of the track length until a redesign in the mid-1970s.

The circuit has hosted 33 top-level six-hour or 1,000km endurance races since the first back in 1967 and TOYOTA, via icons such as the 2000GT and TOYOTA 7 as well as Group C cars and the recent hybrids LMP1s, has won 11 of these.

The target is to add another Fuji winner's trophy to the collection this week as the TOYOTA versus Porsche battle in LMP1 takes place for the final time in Japan prior to the German manufacturer's withdrawal from that category in WEC.

TOYOTA's discussions regarding its own future participation in WEC are proceeding with all stakeholders. These have been the subject of various media reports, of varying degrees of accuracy, and a decision is expected within October, although not necessarily during the Fuji event.

Hisatake Murata, Team President: "We are excited and motivated for our home race at Fuji Speedway. After Le Mans, this is the most important event for our team; TOYOTA has a great record at Fuji Speedway in WEC and we are pushing hard to get another strong result. Many of our team members are based at Higashi-Fuji so we are looking forward to meeting with them again, and also to race in front of our passionate Japanese fans. We will challenge Porsche as one team with one target: victory."

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): "We won at Fuji last year and it has always been a good race for TOYOTA so I'm looking forward to being very competitive again. I always enjoy visiting Japan and it's a home race for us which makes it even more special. Fuji is a circuit which relies more on mechanical grip and power which normally suits our car. I think we can be strong and hopefully bag a win."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It is good to be racing our TS050 HYBRID again in Japan; I enjoy showing this car to the Japanese fans. Of course, I race often in Japan in Super Formula but it's special to compete for TOYOTA in a World Championship race. I expect we will be stronger in Fuji compared to the last three races so, together with our home fans, we will fight to win."

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): "Fuji is a new circuit for me, like many on the WEC calendar, so I need to learn the lay-out first. I'm excited to meet our fans at TOYOTA's home race; I have heard a lot about them. Let's hope we are strong and competitive. Mike, Kamui and the whole team are doing a fantastic job and pushing really hard so we can compete at the front."

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): "Fuji is the home race for TOYOTA so it is an important event for us. The team won the race last year and generally has been strong there so I am looking forward to a good weekend. We've been on the podium in the last few races but we want more than third places; we are working hard to find more performance and we want to win more races before the season is finished."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8): "I'm really looking forward to being back in the car at Fuji, especially in front of our home fans and so many TOYOTA colleagues. I was cheering on the team from afar in Austin and I was quite encouraged to see the race-day performance. Fuji is normally a track which suits our car much better than Austin so I am optimistic we can be strong there."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It's a great experience to race in my home country so I'm excited about this weekend. It's one of my favourite tracks and I know it very well after many years of racing in different Japan series. I think we can be very competitive there and personally I would love to stand on the middle step of the podium, as I did in 2012 and 2013."

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in 6 Hours of Fuji:

2012 #7: Qualifying 1st; Race 1st.

2013 #7: Qualifying 3rd; Race 1st. #8: Qualifying 2nd; Race 27th.

2014 #7: Qualifying 4th; Race 2nd. #8: Qualifying 1st; Race 1st.

2015 #1: Qualifying 5th; Race 5th. #2: Qualifying 6th; Race 6th.

2016 #7: Qualifying 3rd; Race 4th. #8: Qualifying 4th; Race 1st.

A German translation of this press release is available on www.RacingByTMG.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 19 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 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 13 pole positions and won 13 races, finishing on the podium a total of 37 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.

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