

WET START TO HOME EVENT FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Friday 13 October 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing's preparations for its home race, the 6 Hours of Fuji, were disrupted by the weather on the opening day of practice for the seventh round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Persistent and often heavy rain hit Fuji Speedway and affected both 90-minute practice sessions today, making fastest lap time comparisons irrelevant.

Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López were at the wheel of the #7 TS050 HYBRID while Anthony Davidson returned to the #8 car alongside Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima.

Fuji Speedway has been a happy hunting ground for TOYOTA in WEC, with four wins in five visits since 2012. All the team's drivers have enjoyed victory on the team's home ground, except José María who is making his first visit to Fuji Speedway.

But his acclimatisation process, and all teams' preparations, was hindered by the weather, with first practice taking place late in the morning after several hours of consistent rain and with fog hanging low over Fuji Speedway.

Despite warm conditions earlier in the week, the temperature was down to 12°C for the first session, which took place on a wet track, meaning both cars could at least collect data on the various wet weather Michelin tyre options.

Regardless of the weather, the team still had a programme of set-up comparisons to complete in order to maximise the performance of the TS050 HYBRIDS. This meant aerodynamic and mechanical changes as well as modifications to hybrid recovery and boost strategies.

The intensity of rain varied during the first session and therefore affected lap times. But afternoon practice was even wetter and was interrupted by a red flag after a few minutes when an LMP2 car lost control and hit the barriers, which needed to be repaired.

Heavier rain during the red flag period delayed the green flag and by then track conditions were extremely bad, so the team took no risk and ended the session early. By then the TS050 HYBRIDS had completed a combined 89 laps over the two sessions, 406km which is less than half what could be expected from a normal, dry Friday.

TS050 HYBRID #7 (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, José María López)

Free practice 1: 3rd (1min 36.010secs), 38 laps

Free practice 2: 1st (1min 39.202secs), 7 laps

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): "There's not a lot to say from today due to the weather, unfortunately. We could do some of our programme in the morning but this afternoon there was no chance. Everyone's in the same boat so we just have to make the best of it and work hard tomorrow, when hopefully the weather will be a little better."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It's a pity about the rain today, particularly for the fans. It always feels great to be back here for my home race at a circuit I know really well but we only had limited running today. We tried to work on wet set-up and to maximise the performance as much as possible; we will continue to work on the balance."

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It was really wet out there. We were able to run a bit in the morning but hardly at all in the afternoon. So we still have a lot of work

to do and there are not many conclusions to take from today's results. We will take it step by step and see how the weather is tomorrow."

TS050 HYBRID #8 (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)

Free practice 1: 4th (1min 36.105secs), 38 laps

Free practice 2: 3rd (1min 41.413secs), 6 laps

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It's nice to be here in Japan again and see our Japanese fans. It's just unfortunate that we couldn't do a lot of laps today because of the conditions. At least we could get some data from first practice so we will analyse this and try to find the right direction on set-up for the rest of the weekend."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It was great to be back, especially here at Fuji which I really enjoy. It's frustrating we couldn't run properly in second practice; we tried our best but the conditions were too bad. We had a good feeling in the morning and worked on the balance but couldn't validate the changes in the afternoon."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8): "So far I have been enjoying being here again in Fuji, except for the weather of course. I'm sorry for the fans particularly in second practice. In the morning we got some data about the different wet tyres and we wanted to try some set-up things in the afternoon but that has to wait for Saturday."

Free practice 1 results:

1st	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	1min 35.527secs	34 laps
2nd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.133secs	35 laps
3rd	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.483secs	38 laps
4th	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+0.578secs	38 laps
5th	#37 Jackie Chan (Cheng/Brundle/Gommendy)	+7.208secs	40 laps
6th	#28 TDS Racing (Perrodo/Vaxiviere/Collard)	+7.698secs	37 laps

Free practice 2 results:

1st	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	1min 39.202secs	7 laps
2nd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+1.321secs	6 laps
3rd	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+2.211secs	6 laps
4th	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+3.581secs	6 laps
5th	#38 Jackie Chan (Tung/Jarvis/Laurent)	+8.235secs	5 laps
6th	#31 Rebellion (Canal/Prost/Senna)	+8.319secs	8 laps

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.



TOYOTA HYBRID

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