

VICTORY IN CHINA FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Sunday 5 November 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing dominated the 6 Hours of Shanghai to win its fourth race of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season on a day tinged with frustration.

Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima in the #8 TS050 HYBRID took victory by more than a lap from their nearest challengers for TOYOTA's third win in Shanghai, setting the fastest lap of the race in the process.

However, the team had been on course for a second consecutive one-two finish prior to a late collision which damaged the #7 TS050 HYBRID of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López. They eventually finished fourth.

That result means TOYOTA goes to the final race of 2017, in Bahrain on 18 November, level on four wins each with Porsche. However, both title battles are over, with Porsche and drivers Timo Bernhard, Earl Bamber and Brendon Hartley confirmed as World Champions.

When the race began, José led from pole in the #7 while Sébastien lost a position but fought back to pass both Porsches. With 26 cars on track, traffic is always a challenge and José hit the #26 LMP2 after 30 minutes, losing eight seconds and dropping to third.

He recovered the position and, as the one-hour mark approached, handed the #7 over to Kamui in second place at the first pit stops. Unlike its sister car, the #8 crew chose to double stint the tyres, and Sébastien resumed in the lead.

But after two hours, all leading cars had made their second pit stops and Kamui led in the #7 with Anthony just behind on new tyres in the #8. Both were well clear of the #2 Porsche while the #1 was now one lap behind.

Anthony put the new tyres to good use and passed Kamui for the lead, recording several quick lap times to extend his advantage prior to a full course yellow, during which both TS050 HYBRIDs pitted, the #7 changing two tyres and switching driver to Mike.

The two TS050 HYBRIDs continued to lead beyond the halfway point and were consistently faster than the competition. Kazuki lapped the third-placed Porsche #2 with around two hours to go and the cars eased their pace to avoid unnecessary risk.

When the final pit stops came with just under an hour to go, Sébastien took new tyres in the #8 while José only refuelled, meaning he led. However, contact with the #91 Porsche GT damaged the left rear of the #7 and cost 13 minutes in the pits.

Quick work by the mechanics allowed the car to return to the track and take the chequered flag in fourth, seven laps behind. Sébastien completed a dominant but bitter-sweet victory on a day when the team had shown the performance to earn a one-two.

Hisatake Murata, Team President: "To win our fourth race of the season is a really special feeling. Well done to everyone in the team for their great work this weekend. We were fastest in every practice session, we earned pole position and now we have won the race. I think we deserved the one-two and it was a pity to lose time right at the end of the race due to contact with a lapped car. Congratulations to Porsche on winning the drivers' and manufacturers' World Championship. We will keep fighting at the final race, when we want to finish the season with another win."

TS050 HYBRID #7 (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, José María López)
Race: 4th, 188 laps, 7 pit stops. Grid: 1st. Fastest lap: 1min 46.033secs

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It was not easy to manage the tyres today, particularly on the second stint but we hung in there. Unfortunately we lost the lead twice due to incidents. It could have been a one-two today and big points for the team; but that didn't happen. Congratulations to car #8; they deserved the win so all credit to them."

Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7): "It was a very unfortunate race for us. We had a good car but we struggled a bit with the tyres. Still we managed to fight for the win. We didn't give up but it was a pity that the last collision dropped us back to fourth. We will be pushing for better in Bahrain."

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): "On my second stint it was difficult with the tyres. Then I had the incident with the GT car. It was my fault for sure, but it's not an easy situation. I was going inside at turn 13; it's the kind of thing you do a few times every race and there is no problem. I will have a look at the video and learn from this to come back stronger."

TS050 HYBRID #8 (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)
Race: 1st, 195 laps, 6 pit stops. Grid: 3rd. Fastest lap: 1min 45.892secs

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It's an amazing result for our car. We had a great fight with the sister car and it's just unfortunate we couldn't bring home a one-two. It's been a great job from the team to strike back from some difficult races with back-to-back wins. Hopefully we can fight for a fifth win in Bahrain and have more wins than Porsche this season. For now let's celebrate the win and enjoy the last fight in Bahrain."

Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8): "It's great to get a win again after actually driving the car, unlike in Fuji! I can properly celebrate this one. The car was great. We struggled a bit compared to #7 in qualifying but we had the best car in the race. I want to say thanks to our car crew because we had the right strategy and strong pit stops. That gave us the platform to win today."

Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8): "Many thanks to the team for giving us such a good car and well to the pit stop crew. My team-mates did a great job but I suffered a lot in the car, with the traffic and all the rubber on track. I lost a bit of time but managed to survive and we had the speed to win by a lap. I am happy with the race result and now the target is to win again in Bahrain."

6 Hours of Shanghai results:

1st	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	195 laps
2nd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+1 laps
3rd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+1 lap
4th	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+7 laps
5th	#31 Rebellion (Canal/Prost/Senna)	+12 laps
6th	#36 Alpine (Lapierre/Menezes/Negrão)	+12 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 14 pole positions and won 15 races, finishing on the podium a total of 40 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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