

## TOYOTA GAZOO RACING ON BAHRAIN FRONT ROW

Friday 17 November 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing narrowly missed out on pole position in a closely-fought qualifying session for the Bapco 6 Hours of Bahrain, the final round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season.

The #7 TS050 HYBRID of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López held top spot for much of the session but was denied a fifth pole of the season in the closing minutes by Porsche #1. They will start from second.

It was a more challenging qualifying for the #8 TS050 HYBRID of Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima which will start from fourth.

Despite missing its target of pole position, the team is determined to fight for a fifth win from nine races in Saturday's six-hour contest.

The majority of the race will take place in darkness so qualifying also took place after sunset, with Mike and Kazuki behind the wheel of their respective cars at the beginning of the session.

Mike immediately put the #7 car in a strong position by becoming the first LMP1 driver to lap the Bahrain International Circuit in less than 1min 40secs. However, Kazuki encountered traffic on his lap and recorded the fourth fastest time.

On his single flying lap, with new tyres, José put the #7 in pole position but was dropped back to second when the #1 Porsche chose to make a third attempt, on a third set of new tyres, and narrowly earned top spot by 0.263secs.

With a significant gap to pole position, the team opted to conserve tyres on the #8 car with a view to Saturday's race therefore Anthony set his qualifying lap on a used set, which gave him little chance of improving on fourth position.

Nevertheless, the #8 car has won three times this season from the second row of the grid so hopes are high of another challenge as TOYOTA targets a winning end to the 2017 season on a track where it has twice before stood on the top step of the podium.

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

Free practice 3: 4th (1min 43.902secs), 24 laps

Qualifying: 2nd (1min 39.646secs average)

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "My time was a bit compromised because I had to slow down on my out lap to get a clear track and I lost temperature in the tyres. So the first sector wasn't perfect but the rest of the lap was good. It looked like we had pole but Porsche #1 used an extra set of tyres which we weren't prepared to do because the race is priority for us."

**José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "I am quite happy considering it's my first time at this track in an LMP1 car. I did a good lap and was only a couple of tenths down on Mike. Every time we have started from pole position this season we haven't achieved the main objective of winning, so maybe second place will be kinder to us!"

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

Free practice 3: 3rd (1min 43.734secs), 25 laps

Qualifying: 4th (1min 40.774secs average)

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "We decided to use the same tyres and that was a challenge for my lap. I did the best I could but I was a bit disappointed with how it went in general. It was not the best qualifying but the race is what counts. We have shown before that we can win from the second row so I am still confident."

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "It was a difficult qualifying for me due to the traffic. Also, we decided our tyre strategy to give priority to the race. I hope that decision is going to give us a better chance tomorrow. Generally we were happy with the car; qualifying doesn't mean much so we still have a good chance."

**Free practice 3 results:**

1st	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	1min 42.438secs	17 laps
2nd	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+0.686secs	20 laps
<b>3rd</b>	<b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.296secs</b>	<b>25 laps</b>
<b>4th</b>	<b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.464secs</b>	<b>24 laps</b>
5th	#38 Jackie Chan (Tung/Jarvis/Laurent)	+6.441secs	18 laps
6th	#37 Jackie Chan (Cheng/Brundle/Gommendy)	+6.900secs	22 laps

**Qualifying results:**

1st	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	1min 39.383secs
<b>2nd</b>	<b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+0.263secs</b>
3rd	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+0.628secs
<b>4th</b>	<b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.391secs</b>
5th	#36 Alpine (Lapierre/Menezes/Negrao)	+7.844secs
6th	#38 Jackie Chan (Tung/Jarvis/Laurent)	+8.229secs

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**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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