



TOYOTA HYBRID

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Toyota Motor Corporation
GAZOO Racing Company

LE MANS 24 HOURS - SIX-HOUR UPDATE

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing led the 86th Le Mans 24 Hours after six hours of the second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

The #8 TS050 HYBRID of Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Fernando Alonso held a modest advantage over Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López in the #7 car at the quarter-distance mark, with 94 laps completed.

Sébastien started the race from pole position and held that advantage into turn one, despite contact from behind from the #1 Rebellion, but it was Mike in the #7 who led the opening lap, staying there for four laps before the positions swapped once more.

Very light rain on parts of the track during the opening hour had little impact but that first-corner contact for the #8 required a precautionary change of rear end at Sébastien's second stop.

Both drivers were planning quadruple stints on the same set of tyres, so refuelling only at the pit stops. Sébastien's third stop came, unfortunately for the #8, at the same time as slow zones were declared due to accidents, giving an advantage to the #7 car which pitted two laps later and resumed in the lead.

At 5.30pm, with 41 laps completed, Fernando took over from Sébastien in second place, on new tyres, for his first racing laps at Le Mans. José took over the leading #7 from Mike two laps later, retaining the lead.

After a rear end change for set-up reasons at his first fuel stop, Fernando returned the #8 to the lead on the 56th lap by passing José, who then had an unscheduled pit stop on lap 58 due to a rear left puncture, costing 47 seconds. Two laps later a brief safety car was brought out due to an incident with an LMP2 car.

On lap 70 another safety car, caused by a heavy accident for the #4 ByKolles, brought out the safety car again. Both TS050 HYBRIDs pitted; José as scheduled for fuel and Fernando due to a right rear puncture. With a lap lead over third place, the time lost pitting under safety car counted for little and the #7 led by a second from the #8 when the race resumed on lap 75.

A lap later, Fernando passed José to put the #8 in the lead once more and at the end of the 81st lap he handed

the car over to Kazuki, who took on new tyres with a slender lead over José, who took on a fifth stint. At the six-hour mark, the #8 led by 12.587secs from Kamui, now in the #7, with the #17 SMP in third, a lap behind.

Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7): “My stint was okay. At the beginning, with the rain coming down, I was trying to be on the safe side and once that passed I tried to keep it consistent. Traffic was okay, difficult at times but we tried to manage it as best we could. In the slow zones sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. It’s a long race so there was no need to risk anything.”

José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7): “My stint was long; I stayed long time in the car and it was hard at the end with the tyres. I am quite happy; it is always very nice to race here but at the same time difficult with the traffic. We managed to stay out of trouble and are still fighting for the race win. It is very good to see the whole team is doing well. We need to keep it safe for both cars and a very close fight.”

Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8): “There were no problems on my stint; I am quite happy with how it went. Me and Mike were close on track all the way through the first stint, just a few seconds apart. It’s a long race so we were being careful and avoiding any risk, particularly through the traffic.”

Fernando Alonso (TS050 HYBRID #8): “It was great. We have been doing a lot of practice but in the race, even if it’s exactly the same circuit and same cars, it is more fun. So far it has been a good start for us and we are leading with a good margin. Hopefully we can keep this result for Toyota and build the advantage. This is a long race. One corner or one lap is not the focus; the important thing is to bring the car to the chequered flag.”

Le Mans 24 Hours after six hours:

1st	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	94 laps
2nd	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	12.587secs
3rd	#17 SMP (Sarrazin/Orudzhev/Isaakyan)	+1 lap
4th	#3 Rebellion (Beche/Laurent/Menezes)	+2 lap
5th	#1 Rebellion (Jani/Lotterer/Senna)	+3 laps
6th	#26 G-Drive (Rusinov/Pizzitola/Vergne)	+4 laps

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