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Toyota Motor Corporation
GAZOO Racing Company

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING FIELDS STAR-STUDED LINE-UP AT 2019 RALLY OF MOROCCO

Fernando Alonso and Marc Coma will enter their first international rally raid competition in the Toyota Hilux with TOYOTA GAZOO Racing at the 2019 Rally of Morocco, final round of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies, as the pair advance through an intensive training programme with their sights set firmly on the Dakar Rally. The Spanish duo's second rally raid competition comes just three weeks after their first outing at the Lichtenburg 400 of the local South African Cross Country Series, an eventful race which tested their perseverance and resolve to the limits.



Joining multiple world champions Fernando and Marc in Morocco are the equally star-studded crews of TOYOTA GAZOO Racing South Africa who boast multiple Dakar Rally and Rally of Morocco victories, and FIA titles between them with: Nasser Al-Attiyah and navigator Mathieu Baumel, Giniel de Villiers and navigator Alex Haro, and Bernhard Ten Brinke and navigator Tom Colsoul. The four crews in TOYOTA GAZOO Racing colours will test their skills against an unparalleled field with impressive lists of accolades of their own as reigning Dakar Rally champions, Nasser and Mathieu, defend their Rally of Morocco crown for the fifth time, heading into the final round of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies in the lead.

From September 29, Fernando and Marc completed a successful four-day testing session in preparation for the Rally of Morocco near Erfoud, some 400 kilometres south of Fes, adding another 1,400 kilometres of quality mileage to their training programme as they both transition into a new discipline of motorsport. The pair continued to be mentored by Dakar Rally winner, Giniel, who also performed technical tests for the team with his new navigator, Alex, before Nasser, Mathieu, Bernhard and Tom completed the team for the pre-event test.



While Giniel has been mentoring Fernando in the Toyota Hilux at various tests since March, Nasser recently invited his new Spanish teammate to Qatar for a private training session in side-by-side off-road vehicles to share his vast rally raid expertise with the newcomer. Without taking a break, Fernando demonstrated his determination, travelling for the two-day training in the Qatari dunes immediately following the conclusion of the South African race.

Starting and concluding in the city of Fes on October 3-9, the 20th anniversary running of the Rally of Morocco will see crews tackling a mixture of technical, fast and sandy tracks and dunes on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Considered a precursor and final long distance training for the Dakar Rally, the latest edition of the Rally of Morocco features a cloverleaf layout with five competitive stages starting on October 5 and covering a total distance of nearly 2,500 kilometres.

Glyn Hall, Team Principal: “The Rally of Morocco is a key event for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing not only to test and develop our Toyota Hilux but also as final preparation for the Dakar Rally. We’re excited for Nasser, who heads into the final round of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies in the lead and a good result will mean a well-deserved fifth world title. Giniel has been working hard together with our engineers to confirm the suspension development we’ve been working on since our test in Namibia in August. In the meantime, Fernando has been continuing his training programme, discovering and learning to drive on even more different terrains, making really good progress as we’ve come to expect from him. This rally is never an easy one. Our crews will be going flat out on all sorts of mixed terrain but we’re ready to take on the challenge.”

Nasser Al-Attiyah (No. 300): “The test went very well for us and we’re definitely ready for the Rally of Morocco. It feels good to have the whole TOYOTA GAZOO Racing team together as we prepare for the rally. Having Fernando in the team is great. I’ve been working with him over the past few days to help him understand how to maintain good pace when driving over sand dunes and camel grass. So far, he has been doing a really good job and I know this rally is going to be an invaluable experience for his Dakar Rally preparations. The team

has done an incredible job with the new Toyota Hilux which has been very exciting to drive. My only goal is to win the Rally of Morocco for the sixth time and win the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies.”

Giniel de Villiers (No. 307): “We’ve been here many, many times and I’ve driven thousands of kilometres in Morocco over the years. The Rally of Morocco is a good place to fine-tune the Toyota Hilux and get ourselves ready for the Dakar Rally, but we still want to achieve a good result. Over the past four days, I’ve been working with our engineers to test different set-ups and validate some of the technical developments on this terrain. Driving 600 kilometres in testing before the race is quite a lot but the car feels good and I’m happy with my new navigator, Alex, in the car. Sometimes, testing can be tougher than the race because you have to try things repeatedly and concentrate to feel the small difference these changes make. It’s also tough on our mechanics who have to change the dampers 50 or 60 times over four days. Nevertheless, everyone at TOYOTA GAZOO Racing feels up to the challenge. We have a strong team with Nasser and Bernhard, and Fernando has been learning very quickly which is really exciting to see.”

Bernhard Ten Brinke (No. 304): “The Toyota Hilux feels amazing. Glyn and our TOYOTA GAZOO Racing engineers have done a really good job. The team has made a really big step in the right direction. It also feels good to be back at the Rally of Morocco with TOYOTA GAZOO Racing. We have four really strong crews with a good balance and different experience levels. I think we can do a good job here together and I want to be in the fight for a podium finish. I’m also enjoying working with Tom in the car. He’s very accurate and motivated which brings a good spirit to the team.”

Fernando Alonso (No. 314): “After my first rally raid competition in South Africa last month, I went straight to Qatar to visit Nasser and spent two days in the dunes with him which was a great learning experience for me. We are building a strong relationship in the team together and I’m looking forward to racing with my teammates. It feels amazing to be part of TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in this programme. The team is highly experienced and successful which gives me a lot of confidence knowing that I’m in good hands. We have a very collaborative team atmosphere between all the drivers, navigators, management, engineers and mechanics. The test went well for us and we covered a lot of kilometres on different types of terrain which adds to my experience level. Marc and I are looking at the Rally of Morocco in terms of more testing. If we can complete the five-day event, we can gain more quality mileage and experience. Having said that, it’s a race after all so I still feel a little bit competitive. I’ll definitely be comparing my performance against my experienced teammates and the field as a reference and to understand how much to push in races like this as we set our sights on the Dakar Rally.”



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