



RAISING THE EXCITEMENT TOYOTA HYBRID

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING COMPLETES DRIVER LINE-UP

Tuesday 28 March 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing can confirm its full driver line-up for the 2017 season, with Yuji Kunimoto and Nicolas Lapierre joining the team for races at Spa-Francorchamps and Le Mans.

Yuji and Nicolas will line-up in the #9 TS050 HYBRID alongside lead driver Stéphane Sarrazin in the second and third races of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season.

Yuji, 26, has a wealth of endurance experience from his eight seasons in Super GT and he wrote headlines last year by beating several world-renowned drivers to win the Super Formula championship. A former Japanese Formula Three champion, Yuji will continue to compete in single-seaters as he defends his Super Formula crown in 2017 alongside another Super GT campaign.

Frenchman Nicolas, 32, is returning to a familiar environment, having raced for the team from 2012 to 2014, earning TOYOTA's first hybrid WEC victories. Since then, he has established himself as a leading LMP2 driver, having twice won the class at Le Mans whilst winning the WEC drivers' title in 2016.

Today's announcement completes the full TOYOTA GAZOO Racing line-up for 2017, following January's confirmation that the #7 car will be driven by Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López, while Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima will compete in the #8.

Toshio Sato, Team President: "I am very pleased to welcome Nicolas and Yuji into our driver line-up for the races at Spa and Le Mans. I am confident that, together with a driver of Stéphane's abilities, we have a strong line-up in the #9. We know Nicolas well and we have maintained a positive relationship. He is a very quick driver who understands what it takes to succeed at Le Mans so I am sure he will fit into the team quickly and easily. Yuji is a promising driver who has shown his speed and determination in Japanese racing. In testing he has been consistently fast, as well as a team player, so I am confident he will adapt to the demands of WEC."

Yuji Kunimoto: "This is really a dream for me. I never imagined that one day I could race for a team like TOYOTA at Le Mans so I am determined to make the most of this opportunity. I enjoyed my first tests with the TS050 HYBRID, which is a really impressive car. LMP1 and endurance racing in Europe are new to me so I am working hard to learn as much as I can from the team; I am sure I will learn a lot from Stéphane and Nicolas, who are both very experienced and quick."

Nicolas Lapierre: "It's great to be back with TOYOTA and I would like to thank the team for this opportunity. I'm really looking forward to racing an LMP1 car again because the cars have developed a lot since I drove the TS040 HYBRID in 2014. The Spa race is coming around very quickly so I am fully focused on preparing myself for the new season. I have stood on the podium before at Le Mans with TOYOTA so my target is clearly to do that again this year."

Yuji Kunimoto Profile

Born	12 September 1990, Yokohama, Japan
Marital status	Single
Height	1.68m
Weight	62kg



Career History

2008	Formula Challenge Japan: 1st (8 wins) Formula BMW Pacific (ART): 16th
2009	Super GT, GT300 class (apr): 10th Japanese Formula Three (TOM'S): 3rd (4 wins)
2010	Super GT, GT300 class (apr): 5th (1 win) Japanese Formula Three (TOM'S): 1st (10 wins)
2011	Super GT, GT300 class (apr): 7th Formula Nippon (INGING): 10th
2012	Super GT (Kraft): 13th Formula Nippon (INGING): 13th
2013	Super GT (LeMans): 5th (1 win) Super Formula (INGING): 10th
2014	Super GT (LeMans): 7th Super Formula (INGING): 7th
2015	Super GT (LeMans): 9th Super Formula (INGING): 9th
2016	Super GT (Bandoh): 4th (1 win) Super Formula (INGING): 1st (2 wins)

Nicolas Lapierre Profile

Born	2 April 1984, Thonon-Les-Bains (France)
Lives	Geneva (Switzerland)
Status	Single
Height	170 cm
Weight	69 kg

1993	Began his career in karts
1997	European Kart Championship, CIK Cadet Class: 6th
2000	French Formula Renault
2001	French Formula Renault: 8th (4th in Junior class)
2002	Formula Renault Eurocup (Graff Racing): 3rd
2003	Formula 3 EuroSeries (Signature Plus): 4th Macau Grand Prix: 1st
2004	Formula 3 EuroSeries (Signature Plus): 3rd (3 wins)
2005	GP2 Series (Arden International): 12th
2006	GP2 Series (Arden International): 9th A1 Grand Prix (Team France): 1st (6 wins)
2007	GP2 Series (DAMS): 12th (2 wins) Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA): 9th
2008	Le Mans Series (ORECA): 12th
2009	Le Mans Series (ORECA): 6th (1 win) Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA): 5th Asian Le Mans Series (ORECA): 3rd
2010	Le Mans Series (Team ORECA): 2nd (1 win) Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA): DNF
2011	Le Mans Series / Inter. Le Mans Cup (ORECA): 1 win Le Mans 24 Hours (ORECA): 5th Sebring 12 Hours (ORECA): 1st
2012	Le Mans 24 Hours (TOYOTA Racing): DNF World Endurance Championship (TOYOTA Racing): 3rd (3 wins)
2013	Le Mans 24 Hours (TOYOTA Racing): 4th World Endurance Championship (TOYOTA Racing): 4th (1 win)

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- 2014** Le Mans 24 Hours (TOYOTA Racing): 3rd
World Endurance Championship (TOYOTA Racing): 6th (2 wins)
- 2015** Le Mans 24 Hours (KCMG): 9th (1st in LMP2)
World Endurance Championship (KCMG): 5th in LMP2 (1 win)
- 2016** Le Mans 24 Hours (Signatech Alpine): 5th (1st in LMP2)
World Endurance Championship (Signatech Alpine): 1st (4 wins)

A German translation of this press release is available on www.toyotahybridracing.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 18 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 is based in Cologne, Germany and 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 10 pole positions and won 11 races, finishing on the podium a total of 31 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 Motorsport GmbH combines its role in the WEC project with its other activities, such as the supply of a World Rally Championship engine for TOYOTA's return to the category in 2017, as well as its engineering services business and customer motorsport activities.

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Media contact: Alastair Moffitt, Marketing & Communications Manager:
alastair.moffitt@toyota-motorsport.com

