

**STRONG START AT LE MANS FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING**

Sunday 4 June 2017

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing finished in the top three positions at the end of a productive official test day at the Circuit de la Sarthe for the Le Mans 24 Hours, the third round of the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Kamui Kobayashi set the fastest lap of the day in the #7 TS050 HYBRID he shares with Mike Conway and Stéphane Sarrazin. His time of 3mins 18.132secs was more than five seconds quicker than the best TOYOTA lap at the 2016 test day.

The #8 TS050 HYBRID of World Championship leaders Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Kazuki Nakajima was second quickest, 1.887secs behind following a positive day of set-up development and tyre comparisons.

There were three TOYOTAs at the top of the timing sheets, with Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto and José María López putting the #9 TS050 HYBRID third. As well as an intense programme of technical adjustments and comparisons, today's test was the first time for Yuji and José María to drive on the Circuit de la Sarthe.

Both drivers have experienced the circuit virtually in the team's driving simulator so they arrived well prepared and then consistently set competitive lap times. For José María, the test also provided final confirmation that he has fully recovered from the back injury which prevented him competing at Spa four weeks ago.

The Circuit de la Sarthe on the outskirts of Le Mans consists partly of public roads and is closed for most of the year. Today's two four-hour sessions are the only testing allowed before practice starts on Wednesday 14 June.

It was therefore an extremely important day for the team to fine-tune the low-downforce-specification TS050 HYBRID, which made its race debut with the #9 crew at Spa-Francorchamps last month.

The team's busy programme was helped by fine weather which allowed it to complete a combined 304 laps, covering 4,143km on a day when the #8 and #9 cars were the only ones in the 60-car field to complete more than 100 laps of the 13.629km circuit.

The team will now prepare for a brief shakedown test on the shorter Bugatti Circuit on Tuesday prior to official scrutineering on Monday 12 June, which takes place in the city centre of Le Mans. The race itself begins on Saturday 17 June.

**TS050 HYBRID #7** (Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, Stéphane Sarrazin)

Official Test: 1st (3min 18.132secs), 94 laps

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "We began the test with quite a good car and the lap times were already strong early in the day, considering how the track felt. The lap times at the end were really encouraging but I am sure Porsche will be working flat-out until the race. The battle has only just started; there's a lot of work to do."

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "It was a smooth start to our 2017 Le Mans. We tried to improve the car for the race and it went well. The lap time, which is our best ever in the test day, is very competitive but we still have work to do because it's a 24-hour race and Porsche are a tough competitor. Let's see what we can do."

**Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "It was a really good day for us. We have a good base although there are still things we need to work on. I hope it will

stay like this with TOYOTAs at the front. We look strong but the race is a different matter so we will be working to improve the balance.”

**TS050 HYBRID #8** (Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson, Kazuki Nakajima)  
Official Test: 2nd (3min 19.290secs), 104 laps

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8):** “It’s good to be back at Le Mans and great to see a TOYOTA lapping in under 3mins 20secs for the first time. I am happy because it was a smooth day and we did we did more than 100 laps; over a quarter of the race distance. Now I am looking forward to race week.”

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8):** “It’s great to drive around this brilliant circuit; I always enjoy it. This year’s car feels good here; I was happy all day with the balance. The track improved as the day went on and the lap times reflected this. Our car performed well throughout so we are pretty pleased at this stage. ”

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):** “I really enjoyed it today; it was nice to drive this track again. It was a productive day in terms of set-up and tyres. So far our base looks strong so it was a positive test and now we have to keep this going for race week. We have a lot of data to analyse so the team will be busy.”

**TS050 HYBRID #9** (Nicolas Lapierre, Yuji Kunimoto, José María López)  
Official Test: 3rd (3min 21.455secs), 106 laps

**Nicolas Lapierre (TS050 HYBRID #9):** “We could run the whole day which was great for our crew because we needed that experience here. We tried different tyres and aerodynamic set-ups; it went well. Well done to Yuji and José; they both did a great job on their first time here at Le Mans and set some quick lap times.”

**Yuji Kunimoto (TS050 HYBRID #9):** “I really enjoyed it today and I discovered that I like this track a lot. My confidence was growing lap by lap and felt more comfortable; the car was nice. My team-mates and the engineers have been very helpful in the preparation for the test and I think I have made good progress.”

**José María López (TS050 HYBRID #9):** “It was good to be back in the car after missing Spa. I really enjoyed driving at Le Mans; I had a nice and smooth session for my first time here. I learnt more about the specific challenge of this track and happily the car was working well. There is still a long way to go but it has started well.”

**Official Test results:**

1st	#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	3min 18.132secs	94 laps
2nd	#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+1.158secs	104 laps
3rd	#9 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing	+3.323secs	106 laps
4th	#2 Porsche (Bernhard/Bamber/Hartley)	+3.380secs	75 laps
5th	#1 Porsche (Jani/Lotterer/Tandy)	+3.968secs	81 laps
6th	#35 Alpine (Panciatichi/Ragues/Negrao)	+10.014secs	71 laps

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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 18 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on five occasions. TOYOTA entered the revived WEC in 2012,



# RAISING THE EXCITEMENT TOYOTA HYBRID

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 11 pole positions and won 13 races, finishing on the podium a total of 34 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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