

TOYOTA GAZOO RACING CONFIRMS DRIVER LINE-UP: FERNANDO ALONSO JOINS

Tuesday 30 January 2018

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing can confirm its drivers for the 2018-19 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season, with Fernando Alonso joining the line-up.

The team has officially submitted its entry to the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and will participate in all eight rounds of the 2018-19 season with two hybrid-powered race cars as it targets victory in the Le Mans 24 Hours and the WEC World Championships.

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will again utilise its 1,000hp TS050 HYBRID car, which won five of nine races in 2017. Development of hybrid technology remains an integral element of TOYOTA's participation in endurance racing as part of the company's commitment to making ever-better road cars.

The driver line-ups for the two TS050 HYBRIDs are now confirmed, with the #7 car competing with an unchanged line-up of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López.

The #8 TS050 HYBRID features a revised driver line-up, with Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima joined by two-time Formula 1 World Champion Fernando Alonso.

Fernando, 36, will make his LMP1 race debut at Spa-Francorchamps in May and will compete in all rounds of the 2018-19 season which do not conflict with his existing Formula 1 obligations.

Anthony Davidson, who won five races in 2017 alongside Sébastien and Kazuki, will remain an important member of the team, bringing his World Championship-winning experience to a new role as Reserve and Development Driver.

Two-time Le Mans winner Alex Wurz will continue as Team Advisor and Ambassador having made a significant contribution since taking the position in 2016.

Akio Toyoda, President, TOYOTA Motor Corporation: "I am looking forward to seeing how much TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will grow when our drivers and all team members take what they have learned thus far in endurance racing and add to it what they will gain from Fernando's experience. The entire team is excited about this opportunity for growth. Through the challenge of WEC endurance races and, among those, on the grueling roads of the Le Mans 24 Hours, TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will do its best, together with Fernando, to outdrive the competition."

Hisatake Murata, Team President: "This WEC season is unique because it features two editions of the Le Mans 24 Hours so we are all looking forward to it. I believe we have an extremely strong driver line-up with real strength in depth. Fernando is a rookie in WEC but he brings speed and experience gained from many years at the top of his sport. We are all excited to work with him but endurance racing is a team effort and we know all of our drivers are performing to a very high level. I would like to thank Anthony for his professional approach in difficult circumstances; he remains a strong part of our driving line-up and he will be busy this season."

Fernando Alonso: "I am very excited to participate in the Le Mans 24 Hours for the first time. It is a race which I have followed closely for a long time and it has always been an ambition of mine to participate. Endurance racing is a different discipline compared to single-seaters and it will be an interesting challenge. I am looking forward to working together with, and learning from, Sébastien and Kazuki, who are both very experienced endurance drivers. It will be a learning curve for me but I am ready for this challenge and I can't wait to get started."

[Full text of Akio Toyoda statement:](#)

"I want to drive an LMP1 car..."
 "I want to race in Le Mans..."
 "I want to win..."

To Fernando Alonso, I say thank you so much for choosing Toyota as a partner for making your Le Mans dream come true.

I am extremely thrilled that Fernando, who has battled it out in numerous races and seen things that nobody on our team has ever experienced, will be driving for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing.

I believe that having Fernando get behind the wheel for our team will only make our cars better.

I am looking forward to seeing how much TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will grow when our drivers and all team members take what they have learned thus far in endurance racing and add to it what they will gain from Fernando's experience. The entire team is excited about this opportunity for growth.

Through the challenge of WEC endurance races and, among those, on the grueling roads of the Le Mans 24 Hours, TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will do its best, together with Fernando, to outdrive the competition.

And, toward our ultimate aim of providing our customers with ever-better cars, I hope we will be able to race with shared aspirations at heart.

We welcome Fernando and, together with Sebastien, Kazuki, Mike, Kamui and José for a total of six drivers, TOYOTA GAZOO Racing will go all out toward achieving all of our goals.

I look forward to everyone's support of TOYOTA GAZOO Racing this season as well.

Thank you.

Driver Profiles

Mike Conway

Born 19 August 1983, Sevenoaks, Great Britain
Le Mans debut 2013
Le Mans starts 4
Le Mans best result 2nd (2016)
WEC starts 37
WEC wins 2
WEC best season 3rd (2016)

Kamui Kobayashi

Born 13 September 1986, Hyogo, Japan
Le Mans debut 2013
Le Mans starts 3
Le Mans best result 2nd (2016)
WEC starts 26
WEC wins 1
WEC best season 3rd (2016)

José María López

Born 26 April 1983, Río Tercero, Argentina
Le Mans debut 2017
Le Mans starts 1

Le Mans best result n/a
WEC starts 8
WEC wins 0
WEC best season 6th (2017)

Sébastien Buemi

Born 31 October 1988, Aigle, Switzerland
Le Mans debut 2012
Le Mans starts 6
Le Mans best result 2nd (2013)
WEC starts 43
WEC wins 10
WEC best season 1st (2014)

Kazuki Nakajima

Born 11 January 1985, Okazaki, Japan
Le Mans debut 2012
Le Mans starts 6
Le Mans best result 4th (2013)
WEC starts 37
WEC wins 7
WEC best season 2nd (2017)

Fernando Alonso

Born 29 July 1981, Oviedo, Spain
Le Mans debut 2018
Le Mans starts 0
Le Mans best result n/a
WEC starts 0
WEC wins 0
WEC best season n/a

A German translation of this press release is available on www.racingbytmg.com. High-resolution copyright-free photos are available for editorial use at www.toyota-motorsport-photos.com.

About TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in the FIA 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, the 2014 manufacturers' and drivers' World Champion, has participated in 48 WEC races since its debut in 2012, earning 14 pole positions, winning 16 times and finishing on the podium a total of 41 times.

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

