



## Toyota Gazoo Racing in the Mix at Le Mans

16 June 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing's preparations for the 84th running of the Le Mans 24 Hours began with a busy and constructive first day of action at the Circuit de la Sarthe yesterday.

Following several days of build-up for the third round of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), the two TS050 HYBRIDs finally hit the track in anger, with a four-hour practice session followed by first qualifying.

With the focus on race set-up, the majority of today's sessions were dedicated to fine-tuning the TS050 HYBRIDs, which showed its potential by setting TOYOTA's fastest lap time at Le Mans since returning in 2012.

That honour went to Stéphane Sarrazin in the #6 car which he shares with Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi on his way to provisional third on the grid, one place ahead of the #5 of Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima.

Rain showers throughout afternoon practice allowed testing of all types of Michelin tyre, providing useful information on their behaviour in different track conditions. The team's main task was aerodynamic and mechanical set-up work.

A productive afternoon was halted early when Stéphane made contact with the barrier late in the session, causing damage to the front bodywork. The pit crew worked hard in the break to have the #6 ready for the beginning of qualifying.

With 60 cars fighting for position on the 13.629km Circuit de la Sarthe, traffic was regularly a factor in qualifying, although conditions stayed dry throughout the two hours.

Just like in the 5 June test day, the TS050 HYBRID showed a significant improvement on 2015, setting a best lap time 2.806secs faster than last year's best TOYOTA qualifying lap, despite the 10% reduction in fuel consumption required by regulations.

Qualifying continues today with another pair of two-hour sessions (19.00 & 22.00). The starting grid is decided by the fastest single lap from any of the qualifying sessions.

**TS050 HYBRID #5** (Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima)

Free practice: 5th (3min 24.031secs), 40 laps

Qualifying 1: 4th (3min 21.903secs), 27 laps

**Anthony Davidson:** “The car felt pretty strong yesterday. I couldn’t get a clear qualifying lap so the time wasn’t as quick as it could have been. But the focus is on the race; that’s the most important thing. I feel like we have a good balance on both compounds of tyre so I’m happy and optimistic for the race.”

**Sébastien Buemi:** “That was much better than one year ago on the same day. We were well prepared and we did a good job so I am pleased with how things are going. Hopefully we can still improve the set-up further; we are working hard to get a strong car for the race.”

**Kazuki Nakajima:** “I think it went well in both sessions. In the daytime session we had a good run and showed decent pace on the long run. In the night it was tough with the traffic so a bit harder to judge. We need to look at all the data and see where we can find improvements but overall I am happy with the car.”

**TS050 HYBRID #6** (Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi)

Free practice 1: 4th (3min 23.158secs), 42 laps

Free practice 2: 3rd (3min 20.737secs), 30 laps

**Stéphane Sarrazin:** “It was an interesting session for us after my mistake in practice. Thanks a lot to the mechanics who did a great job to get the car ready for qualifying. It is a big credit to them that we didn’t lose any time. The car feels good for the race; we still need to fine-tune but we are not far away.”

**Mike Conway:** “Stéph got a clean lap and it’s nice to be in the top three. The balance is really good and it feels like we have a decent race car. We look okay but we just need to work on the details to be ready. We will work hard to maximise our track time today and get the best race set-up.”

**Kamui Kobayashi:** “I am quite happy with how it has gone. The team has worked really hard to prepare properly for the week and we made good progress. We got a lot of data and this will help us for the race. I did a long run in the night session; there was a lot of traffic but I’m pleased with how it went.”

-

#### **Free practice results:**

1st	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	3min 22.011secs	44 laps
2nd	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+0.539secs	47 laps
3rd	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+0.974secs	37 laps
<b>4th</b>	<b>#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.147secs</b>	<b>42 laps</b>
<b>5th</b>	<b>#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+2.020secs</b>	<b>40 laps</b>
6th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+3.515secs	38 laps

-

#### **Qualifying 1 results:**

1st	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	3min 19.733	27 laps
2nd	#1 Porsche (Bernhard/Webber/Hartley)	+0.470secs	25 laps
<b>3rd</b>	<b>#6 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+1.004secs</b>	<b>30 laps</b>
<b>4th</b>	<b>#5 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>	<b>+2.170secs</b>	<b>27 laps</b>
5th	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	+2.733secs	20 laps

6th #7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer) +3.047secs 26 laps