

**TOYOTA GAZOO RACING ALL SET FOR SILVERSTONE**

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TOYOTA GAZOO Racing begins its challenge for the 2017 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) with a new car and revised driver line-up for the season-opening 6 Hours of Silverstone this weekend.

A heavily-modified TS050 HYBRID, featuring upgraded hybrid powertrain plus mechanical and aerodynamic updates, will make its competitive debut in the first of nine endurance races which will decide the 2017 championship.

With only two aerodynamic packages permitted in 2017, TOYOTA will bring the high-downforce version of the TS050 HYBRID to Silverstone, where it has finished on the podium in each of its five previous visits so far.

The 5.901km Silverstone circuit, one of the most historic on the WEC calendar having been opened in 1948, is famed for its sweeping corners which put a premium on downforce rather than outright top speed.

With around 35,000km of pre-season testing under its belt, including the two-day Prologue event at Monza earlier this month, the team heads to Silverstone ready to take on LMP1 rivals Porsche in a two-way battle for World Championship honours.

Behind the wheel, three-time World Touring Car champion José María López makes his TOYOTA race debut in the #7 TS050 HYBRID alongside Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi, race winners and title contenders in 2016.

In the sister car, the #8, Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima are reunited for a third consecutive season. Anthony and Sébastien have driven together since 2013 and won the 2014 title wearing the #8.

Home heroes Anthony and Mike have enjoyed their share of success at Silverstone down the years and both are previous winners of the Richard Lloyd Trophy, presented to the highest placed member of the British Racing Drivers' Club.

Track action begins on Friday with two 90-minute sessions, while a final hour-long practice on Saturday morning takes place before qualifying. The six-hour race, which last year saw 1,144km completed by the winning car, begins at midday on Sunday.

**Toshio Sato, Team President:** "The start of a new WEC season is always an exciting time and we will travel to Silverstone with plenty of hope and expectations. I would like to thank the team for their strong effort over the winter to introduce our updated TS050 HYBRID and prepare it for the new season. It is a very intense period for the whole team but I am proud of our preparations and I believe we have done everything in our power to be ready. Now we will see how we compare with Porsche; we will be pushing to the maximum to get a strong result."

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "Silverstone is my home race; a track I raced on many, many times. I really like Silverstone because it's fast flowing and good fun. It will be a tricky race especially with traffic but I think we have a competitive car and we arrive there well prepared. Even though it's hard to tell at the moment where we are compared to our main rival, I'm sure we will see a tough battle so I'm really looking forward to it and I'm optimistic."

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "It's a great track with a lot of history, especially in endurance racing, and I enjoy racing in front of the British fans. They are

real motorsport enthusiasts and we usually see a big crowd. We are here to win races so that is the target at Silverstone. It will be challenging as always in WEC but we want to show our performance after a positive winter of testing. It's gone well so I'm confident we can put on a good show."

**José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7):** "I am very much looking forward to my first-ever race in an LMP1 car and my first race for TOYOTA. Testing has gone well and I feel at home in the team already. With Mike and Kamui, I have quickly developed a strong relationship; I can't wait to race together this weekend. It's a long time since I raced at Silverstone but it will be good to go back. It's a high-speed track and I'm sure the TS050 HYBRID will be a lot of fun there."

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "Silverstone is a high-downforce circuit and I think our car can be strong there. I have nice memories of racing there; I had my first podium in WEC in 2013, we won the following year and I had another podium in 2015. All in all it was usually a good race for me so I hope we can repeat that again this year. I like the atmosphere as well at Silverstone; they are really enthusiastic so it's always nice to come back. It's hard to say what we can expect. Looking at the Prologue results we believe we are competitive; now we need to confirm it."

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "There's a lot to look forward to this season. Obviously Silverstone is truly my home track as I live very close by and I've driven there in all kinds of cars over the years. It's a great circuit to drive which really highlights the performance of modern LMP1 cars, especially in the fast, flowing corners where you take advantage of the downforce. The championship battle starts in Silverstone and I believe we've got the car to fight at the front."

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):** "Personally I like Silverstone a lot. It's a nice lay-out which is fun to drive and the combination of high-speed corners from Copse to Maggotts is one of the best sections on any circuit in the world. We go to Silverstone with the clear aim of winning the race. It's difficult to predict the competitiveness of the two LMP1 manufacturers but I'm excited by the challenge. I think we are ready to get the season started."

#### **TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in 6 Hours of Silverstone:**

- 2012** #7: Qualifying 3rd; Race 2nd.
- 2013** #7: Qualifying 1st; Race 4th. #8: Qualifying 2nd; Race 3rd.
- 2014** #7: Qualifying 1st; Race 2nd. #8: Qualifying 5th; Race 1st.
- 2015** #1: Qualifying 4th; Race 3rd. #2: Qualifying 6th; Race 4th.
- 2016** #5: Qualifying 6th; Race 16th. #6: Qualifying 5th; Race 2nd.

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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, 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



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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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