**SHANGHAI SHOWDOWN FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING**

Monday 31 October 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing heads to China in a positive mood for the penultimate race of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), the 6 Hours of Shanghai at the Shanghai International Circuit.

Victory in the last race, on TOYOTA’s home ground at Fuji Speedway, enhanced the position of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi in the drivers’ World Championship.

With two races to go and a maximum of 52 points to fight for, the #6 TS050 HYBRID drivers are second in the standings, 23 off the lead, having reduced the deficit by 21 points since the Nürburgring race in August.

Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima head to Shanghai targeting a first podium of a season which has seen various misfortune strike the #5 TS050 HYBRID.

Competition is expected to again be extremely close, with the last two races both having seen a top three from three different manufacturers separated by less than 30 seconds after six hours of racing.

TOYOTA has a strong record at the 5.451km Shanghai International Circuit, winning the race in 2012 and 2014 among the four podiums the team has achieved there.

The circuit, located around 40km from central Shanghai, was built in 2004 and has hosted WEC since the championship was reborn in 2012. Prior to that, China was already a destination for endurance racing, with the Zhuhai International Circuit in Guangdong hosting races in 2010 and 2011.

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing faces a busy preparation in China, with Friday’s two 90-minute practice sessions, followed by a one-hour final practice on Saturday morning, to optimise set-up of the TS050 HYBRID on its first visit to Shanghai. Grid positions, and a point for pole, will be decided on Saturday afternoon while the race begins at 11am local time on Sunday.

**Toshio Sato, Team President**: “It was a very satisfying result to return to the top step of the podium in our home race at Fuji Speedway. Now we want to take this momentum and finish the season strongly; we are highly motivated to continue our run of podiums. The level of competition within WEC at the moment is incredible. The last two races in particular have been flat-out sprint races, with nothing between the three manufacturers after six hours of tight racing, so we know we must again perform to the maximum if we are to achieve our targets. We are looking forward to this challenge in Shanghai.”

**Anthony Davidson (TS050 HYBRID #5)**: “I was the first driver to complete a lap of the track in Formula 1 back in 2004 so I have a piece of history there. It’s a really challenging circuit with a lot of good features, particularly the ever-tightening first turns, then the unwinding 13 and 14. It’s a fascinating challenge. You also have some fast sweeping corners and a long straight so it’s not easy for the engineers. I’ve always enjoyed the track so I am looking forward to driving the TS050 HYBRID there.”

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #5)**: “It’s a good track and one of my favourites among the newer ones. I always like the high-speed corners and the whole lay-out is very flowing so as a driver I enjoy it. I have a good memory of scoring points in my third Formula 1 race and I won with Anthony there in 2014 on our way to the championship as well. The Chinese fans are also getting ever more knowledgeable about motorsport and WEC which is nice to see.”

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #5)**: “I’m looking forward to this weekend. Our TS050 HYBRID has been getting better and better in the last races so the target is obviously to fight at the front again. The racing has been so close in the last couple of races which is great for the fans and exciting for the drivers too. We will be giving our all to get back on the podium after a long wait and I’m optimistic we have a strong chance. First we have plenty of preparation to get the car set-up in the best way.”

**Stéphane Sarrazin (TS050 HYBRID #6)**: “Shanghai is a very difficult track with a lot of long corners, especially the first sector which is not easy. But I like this challenge; it is exciting for a driver. I had a strong race there last year in drying conditions so this year with our fast TS050 HYBRID we will enjoy much more and it will be even better. After our win in Fuji, I am really excited to race in China and fight for another good result, particularly with the championship still open.”

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #6)**: “Shanghai is a really cool circuit with some good high speed sections. There are only two races to go this season so this weekend is really important for us because we are still in the fight for the World Championship. It’s going to be really difficult to catch the Porsche #2 guys but we will keep fighting until the end of the season. The first target is to get strong results in Shanghai and Bahrain to keep up our run of podium finishes.”

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #6)**: “It was great to get my first WEC win in our last race at Fuji and now I am impatient for more. I hope we can again be strong in Shanghai. As with all tracks this year, it is my first time there in an LMP1 car but I know the circuit well. I’m looking forward to driving the TS050 HYBRID there and I hope we can again be in the fight at the front. We want to score good points to help us in the championship.”

**TOYOTA GAZOO Racing in 6 Hours of Shanghai:**

**2012**#7: Qualifying 1st; Race 1st.

**2013**#7: Qualifying 1st; Race 2nd. #8: Qualifying 3rd; Race DNF.

**2014**    #7: Qualifying 4th; Race 2nd. #8: Qualifying 2nd; Race 1st.

**2015**    #1: Qualifying 5th; Race 6th. #2: Qualifying 6th; Race 5th.

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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 and including the 2016 edition, TOYOTA cars have raced in 18 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on five occasions (1992, 1994, 1999, 2013 and 2016). 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 29 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](mailto:alastair.moffitt@toyota-motorsport.com)