

SPA PAIN FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING

Saturday 7 May 2016

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing lost a likely victory in the second round of the 2016 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) when mechanical issues hit both cars at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium today.

TOYOTA, which started the race as manufacturers' World Championship leaders, led comfortably after four hours and looked set to take victory in the WEC 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, its first since 2014.

But engine problems for both TS050 HYBRIDs put them out of contention. The #5 of Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima was classified 26th, but earned 12 points in terms of manufacturers' World Championship points. The #6 of Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi retired.

Prior to the mechanical issues, the two TS050 HYBRIDs demonstrated significantly improved performance. The #5 had been leading by over a minute, with the #6 in third after an earlier accident with a lapped car required it to pit for repairs.

TOYOTA's next race is the Le Mans 24 Hours on 18 June, when 250,000 spectators will witness the 84th edition of the world's most famous endurance race. Prior to that, the official test day at Circuit de la Sarthe takes place on 5 June.

Toshio Sato, Team President: "We saw positive signs in terms of performance but the end result is very hard to take. Thanks to the great effort from the team in Cologne and Higashi-Fuji, we showed a clear improvement compared to Silverstone. We consistently set very strong lap times and were able to lead the race until the last two hours. But unfortunately we experienced damaged engines on both cars. Now we will urgently address what has happened and find counter-measures before Le Mans."

TS050 HYBRID #5 (Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima)
Race: 26th, 114 laps, 5 pit stops. Grid: 5th. Fastest lap: 1min 59.740secs

Anthony Davidson: "Obviously it is really disappointing, having looked so good earlier in the race. I really feel we deserved it today and it was cruelly taken away due to a problem we have never seen before. In all of the kilometres we have done in testing, we have never seen such a problem. Now we have to dust ourselves off and get ready for Le Mans."

Sébastien Buemi: "We cannot be happy but we have to take the positives. We were leading the race by a long way and I don't remember the last time that happened. The performance was there and that is the positive out of this weekend. Now we focus on Le Mans and fight back."

Kazuki Nakajima: "A difficult day for us. I think we did everything right in terms of tyre choice, downforce level and strategy. The positive side is that we were really competitive and we showed we can fight. But it's disappointing to end like this, because it was a great chance to win. I feel sorry for all the team."

TS050 HYBRID #6 (Stéphane Sarrazin, Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi)
Race: DNF, 87 laps, 6 pit stops. Grid: 3rd. Fastest lap: 2min 00.177secs

Stéphane Sarrazin: "It was a very difficult day; the most difficult for us in a long time. We had strong performance and both cars should have finished on the podium."

We looked good and that's encouraging for Le Mans. We have the car to fight and we have one month to get ready."

Mike Conway: "That was tough. I made a mistake, touching an LMP2 car and that damaged our race. After that we were pushing as much as we could and got up into the podium places. We had a good strategy and things were working out. We could have had two podium finishes today but it wasn't to be."

Kamui Kobayashi: "Unfortunately it is a disappointing result for us. We showed the performance but we couldn't show the result which is a real pity. The encouraging fact is the strong performance of the TS050 HYBRID, so we are looking forward to Le Mans."

WEC 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps results:

1st	#8 Audi (di Grassi/Duval/Jarvis)	160 laps
2nd	#2 Porsche (Dumas/Jani/ Lieb)	+2 laps
3rd	#13 Rebellion (Tuscher/Kraihamer/Imperatori)	+4 laps
4th	#12 Rebellion (Prost/Piquet/Heidfeld)	+5 laps
5th	#7 Audi (Fässler/Lotterer/Tréluyer)	+5 laps
6th	#4 Bykolles (Trummer/Webb/Rossiter)	+9 laps

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing 2016 Results:

Silverstone: #5: Qualifying 6th; Race 16th / #6 Qualifying 5th; Race 2nd.

Spa: #5: Qualifying 5th; Race 26th / #6 Qualifying 3rd; Race DNF.

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

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 17 Le Mans 24 Hours races, achieving a best result of second place on four occasions (1992, 1994, 1999 and 2013). 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 10 races, finishing on the podium a total of 25 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. www.toyota-motorsport.com / www.facebook.com/toyotamotorsport / @Toyota_Hybrid

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