**END OF AN ERA IN BAHRAIN FOR TOYOTA GAZOO RACING**

Monday 16 November 2015

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing bids farewell to driver Alex Wurz and its double-title-winning TS040 HYBRID this weekend in the Six Hours of Bahrain, the final round of the 2015 World Endurance Championship.

The 1,000hp, four-wheel-drive hybrid prototype will compete in its 16th race, marking the end of an era wearing the #1 it earned by winning both drivers’ and manufacturers’ World Championships in 2014.

That #1 car will be driven by Anthony Davidson, Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima in Bahrain, with the #2 piloted by Alex, Stéphane Sarrazin and Mike Conway in a race which starts in daylight and finishes in darkness.

Bahrain will see Alex’s final race before retirement, as announced last week. In his four seasons with the team, he has played a central role in technical development, as well as contributing to development of the whole team to meet the specific demands of endurance racing.

Prior to the this weekend’s race, Alex has taken part in 27 WEC races for TOYOTA, winning five and finishing on the podium a total of 11 times.

Alex’s most recent win came in Bahrain last year, alongside Stéphane and Mike. That put him alongside Anthony and Sébastien on five wins for the team, the most for any TOYOTA driver in WEC.

Bahrain also holds a special significance for the TS040 HYBRID as it was the location where Anthony and Sébastien secured their drivers’ crown last year, and it is a track on which TOYOTA has won twice in three attempts.

Whilst representing the perfect farewell to car and driver, another win is considered unlikely given the relative performance of Audi and Porsche. Nevertheless, the team heads to Bahrain determined to end the TS040 HYBRID era in positive fashion.

Since its first race at Silverstone in April 2014, the TS040 HYBRID has won five races, including three one-twos. In total, it has finished on the podium 13 times and started from pole position four times, including the 2014 Le Mans 24 Hours.

This weekend’s race takes place on Saturday, with the green flag flying at 15.00 local time. To prepare for that, Thursday sees two practice sessions (15.15 & 19.30) before final practice (11.00) and qualifying (17.30) on Friday.

**Toshio Sato, Team President:** “Alex has been a fundamental part of our team since the very beginning, in 2011. I would like to sincerely thank him for his contribution to our WEC project; his technical input, motivation and ability have been invaluable to us. It is sad to think about the last-ever race for our TS040 HYBRID as we enjoyed some fantastic times with this car in 2014. But the end of this era also means the start of a new one and we are already hard at work, in Cologne and at Higashi-Fuji, to develop our next challenger. I hope we can mark the final race for to Alex and the TS040 HYBRID with a positive result this weekend; I know that everyone in the team is pushing hard for this.”

**Anthony Davidson (TS040 HYBRID #1)**: “I have great memories of Sébastien and I winning the drivers’ World Championship in Bahrain last season so it is a special track for me. Like Austin, the weather is usually pretty hot in Bahrain; it’s not easy for the drivers or the pit crews. We have always been strong there and the team won in 2013 and 2014. This year it will be a different story but we still want to stand on the podium again before the end of the season so we will not give up.”

**Sébastien Buemi (TS040 HYBRID #1)**: “Bahrain is a track that I know well and I really like. Also I have good memories as we won the drivers’ title there last year so I am looking forward to going back. We know it is going to be a tough weekend and we cannot expect any help from the weather as it is usually dry there. All season we have seen big lap time improvements compared to 2014 so I am interested to see what our car can do on this track.”

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS040 HYBRID #1)**: “I have only raced in LMP1 once in Bahrain, in 2013 but I have been there a few times in other categories so I know the track pretty well. Normally the weather will not be a big factor but I remember my first time in Bahrain in GP2 when it rained, which was a big surprise. I certainly won’t be banking on that this weekend. No matter what, I will push hard. I really want to deliver a strong result as a reward for the team who have worked so hard this year.”

**Alex Wurz (TS040 HYBRID #2)**: “The last race of the season came around quicker than I thought, but I am looking forward to Bahrain. I like this race not only because of the warmer weather and visiting one of my favourite restaurants, but also because I love the track. Certainly we can't expect that the performance to Audi or Porsche will change, but still I will go there fully motivated and in attack mood.”

**Stéphane Sarrazin (TS040 HYBRID #2)**: “I really enjoy the Bahrain track and I have gone well there in the past. Both of my WEC wins with TOYOTA have come in Bahrain so I have some happy memories. We know we are not on the same performance level as Audi and Porsche this year so it will be very hard to challenge again. But our job is to get the maximum out of our car and that is what we will do. I hope we can get a good result for Alex in his last race.”

**Mike Conway (TS040 HYBRID #2)**: “I like Bahrain and it will always be a special place for me as the track where I won my first WEC race. It is one of only two tracks this year where I arrive already with some good miles under my belt in an LMP1 car. That definitely makes it easier as I don’t have to learn the track with this car, so I am looking forward to the weekend. It’s the last race of 2015 so I would like to say thanks to the team for always giving everything this year despite the difficulties. I hope we can end it with a strong result, especially for Alex.”

**TOYOTA GAZOO Racing at Bahrain International Circuit:**

**2012** #7: Qualifying 3rd; Race DNF.

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

**2014** #7: Qualifying 4th; Race 1st. #8: Qualifying 2nd; Race 11th.

**TOYOTA GAZOO Racing 2015 Results:**

**Silverstone**: #1: Qualifying 4th; Race 3rd / #2 Qualifying 6th; Race 4th.

**Spa**: #1: Qualifying 6th; Race 8th / #2 Qualifying 7th; Race 5th.

**Le Mans**: #1: Qualifying 8th; Race 8th / #2 Qualifying 7th; Race 6th.

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

**Austin**: #1: Qualifying 5th; Race 4th / #2 Qualifying 6th; Race DNF.

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

**Shanghai**: #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, 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 with its first hybrid LMP1 car, the TS030 HYBRID, which won five of the 14 races it entered over two seasons. It was succeeded in 2014 by the four-wheel-drive TS040 HYBRID, which won its debut race and subsequently the 2014 drivers' and manufacturers' World Championships. They were designed and built by TOYOTA Motorsport GmbH (TMG), where the race team is based. TMG previously represented TOYOTA in World Rally and Formula 1, and was responsible for the design and operation of TOYOTA's TS020 Le Mans car in 1998-99. TMG now combines motorsport participation with work as a high-performance engineering services provider to third party companies, as well as the TOYOTA family.

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