

Tommi Mäkinen Leads Toyota GAZOO Racing's WRC Return in 2017

Toyota City, Japan, July 7, 2015—Toyota GAZOO Racing has determined its team structure leading up to Toyota's return to the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in 2017.

Toyota President Akio Toyoda will serve as team chairman while Tommi Mäkinen*, a celebrated WRC veteran, will be offering his expertise as team principal. With comprehensive oversight from Mäkinen, who holds four drivers' titles over his 18-year WRC career, the team will strengthen its vehicle development capabilities and work toward 2017.

Team name	Toyota GAZOO Racing
Vehicle	Yaris WRC (length: 3910 mm; width: 1820 mm)
Team chairman	Akio Toyoda
Team principal	Tommi Mäkinen



Toyota President Akio Toyoda and Tommi Mäkinen

Message from Team Chairman Akio Toyoda

Whenever I'm behind the wheel, I always think: "it is the road that makes the car."

For Toyota to make ever-better cars, we have to get a feel for all the kinds of roads that are out there.

Rallying requires us to drive on the very roads our customers use every single day, and I believe it is the perfect training activity, ultimately helping us to strengthen our products.

As the pinnacle of rallying, WRC is the best way to experience roads all over the world—that's why Toyota is returning to the championship. And I am very happy and excited to have Tommi Mäkinen heading up our WRC team.

I first met Tommi in 2013. At that time he was my instructor, helping me improve my driving technique. In the end, he taught me a lot more; he showed me the appeal of rallying and the relationship between vehicle development and rallying.

Tommi has abundant experience and fresh ideas for vehicle development, both of which will be valuable

assets to us. After talking to Tommi, I felt: “I want to work with him; I want him to help us make better cars,” and that’s how I came to ask for his support with this project. With Tommi behind us, Toyota will forge ahead with our return to WRC and also our efforts to make ever-better cars.

Rallying allows both participants and spectators to feel the enjoyment of cars, and it encourages car manufacturers to hone their skills. We have been away from WRC for a long time as a manufacturer. I have huge respect for the manufacturers, drivers, team members, and fans that make this wonderful competition what it is, and I’m thrilled to bring Toyota back to WRC. Please join me in supporting Toyota GAZOO Racing.

Akio Toyoda

* Over an 18-year career spanning from 1985 to 2003, Tommi Mäkinen, won 24 WRC rallies. During his career at Mitsubishi, accomplished a remarkable four consecutive WRC drivers’ titles (1996 to 1999). He also achieved impressive results after moving to Subaru World Rally team in 2002, prior to his retirement from WRC the following year.