

## Shanghai Success for TOYOTA GAZOO Racing

TOYOTA GAZOO Racing overcame challenging weather conditions in China to win the 6 Hours of Shanghai, the fifth round of the 2018-19 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).



The #7 TS050 HYBRID crew of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López won their second successive race, following victory at Fuji Speedway, to close the gap in the drivers' World Championship to five points with three races remaining.

Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Fernando Alonso in the #8 TS050 HYBRID retain the World Championship lead following their second place, while TOYOTA GAZOO Racing heads the teams' standings by 28 points as a result of its fourth one-two of the season.



On the day when TOYOTA GAZOO Racing won the World Rally Championship manufacturers' title following victory on Rally Australia, changing and difficult weather conditions made for a challenging six hours for the WEC team.

Morning rain forced a safety car start due to treacherous track conditions but even driving at reduced speed proved risky and soon an accident further down the field prompted a red flag, with the pole position #7 TS050 HYBRID leading from the #8 car.

A minor improvement in conditions allowed a short green flag period around 70 minutes after the start and during this José ran slightly wide in the #7 which allowed Sébastien to claim the lead for the #8, prior to another safety car and red flag sequence.



Soon after the two-hour mark, the race re-started behind the safety car again. The TS050 HYBRID required a refuelling stop on lap 27, during which Kamui took over the #7 and Fernando got behind the wheel of the #8, both temporarily towards the back of the field until other cars too made their pit stops.

When the running order stabilised around half distance, Fernando was second with Kamui, delayed due to time lost in a congested pit lane, fourth. Fernando battled through GT cars to overtake the #1 Rebellion for the lead, while Kamui was similarly spectacular in passing Jenson Button's #11 SMP for second.

The next safety car, for a damaged LMP1 on the start-finish straight, came with just over two hours remaining. Kamui had to make a fuel stop on lap 55 and the team focused on keeping the race lead for as long as possible considering the successive safety car and red flag periods, bringing Fernando in for his fuel stop a lap later. That additional lap cost more time than expected due to a combination of factors and Fernando briefly dropped to third before overtaking the #11 SMP.



Track conditions slowly improved and the TS050 HYBRIDS stretched their advantage at the front. The final driver change with around 70 minutes remaining saw Mike take over the leading #7 with Kazuki in the #8 pushing hard to close the gap, setting the fastest lap of the race in the process.

The weather took a turn for the worse in the final 30 minutes, with steady rain, but despite another safety car closing up the field, Mike held on to win by 1.419 seconds.

The 2018-19 WEC season resumes after a long winter break with the 1,000 Miles of Sebring in Florida on 15 March, prior to a race at Spa and the season-finale at Le Mans in June.



**Hisatake Murata, Team President:**

"This race was the start of the second half of this season so I am pleased to have another one-two victory, especially in such weather. We got the one-two finish we were aiming for but we found some things which can be improved in the future, when such situations occur again. Finally, I want to give my big congratulations to our friends at TOYOTA GAZOO Racing WRT on winning the World Rally Championship today; it's a fantastic achievement in just the second season back."

**TS050 HYBRID #7**

Race: 1st, 113 laps, 8 pit stops. Grid: 1st. Fastest lap: 2min 01.995secs

**Mike Conway (TS050 HYBRID #7):**

"It was not an easy race for me in those conditions; visibility was very difficult when it started raining at the end and the tyres were not up to temperature. I'm really happy with the result so big congratulations to the whole team, and thanks to my car crew and team-mates for another solid job. It's great to win and continue the momentum from Fuji, especially as it's the last race of the year. Now we will keep pushing over the winter so we can finish the season strongly."

**Kamui Kobayashi (TS050 HYBRID #7):**

"The team did a great job and Mike and José did well; I'm really pleased to win again. My stint was a hard one because I came out behind the safety car and there were many other cars from other categories around me in heavy rain with very little visibility. I concentrated on minimising risk and overtaking cleanly, with the belief that the safety car would need to come out again. When it did and we were leading, I just focused on keeping a gap."

**José María López (TS050 HYBRID #7):**

"The team did a fantastic job today in very tricky conditions so thanks a lot to them. It is fantastic to have achieved the win today. From my side it was a short but really hard race. There was a lot of water on the track at the start and, as the first car, I had the advantage of better visibility but I was also the first to reach each of the rivers across the circuit. Fortunately I kept the car on track despite a small mistake at the hairpin."

**TS050 HYBRID #8**

Race: 2nd, 113 laps, 9 pit stops. Grid: 2nd. Fastest lap: 2min 01.381secs

**Sébastien Buemi (TS050 HYBRID #8):**

"I did the first stint when the conditions were very difficult but our car was strong even in these very wet conditions. Personally I am happy with my driving as I could take the lead from the sister car. I think we had a very quick car and the speed for the victory but the #7 crew had a bit more luck with their pit stops so the final result is a bit disappointing."

**Kazuki Nakajima (TS050 HYBRID #8):**

"It was a difficult race in difficult conditions. We had a good car but we had bad luck with our pit stop during the safety car. I think we were unlucky for the second race in a row and I hope the luck will come back to us in the future. The year is over but the WEC season still has three races remaining and we will push to get back into the middle of the podium."

**Fernando Alonso (TS050 HYBRID #8):**

"It was a tough race due to the weather conditions, the amount of water on the track and the safety car periods. Wet weather races are always very stressful, also in terms of visibility. I think we had a good, fast car and did the best we could; we were quite competitive today and could fight for the win. In the end it did not work out but we will try it again next time."

**6 Hours of Shanghai results:**

|            |  |                   |
|------------|--|-------------------|
| <b>1st</b> | <b>#7 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>                    | <b>113 laps</b>   |
| <b>2nd</b> | <b>#8 TOYOTA GAZOO Racing</b>                    | <b>+1.419secs</b> |
| 3rd        | #11 SMP (Aleshin / Petrov / Button)              | +1 lap            |
| 4th        | #1 Rebellion (Jani / Lotterer / Senna)           | +1 lap            |
| 5th        | #3 Rebellion (Beche / Laurent / Menezes)         | +3 laps           |
| 6th        | #10 DragonSpeed (Allen / Hanley / Van der Zande) | +3 laps           |