**“Pechito” López new FIA WTCC Champion**

27th October 2014

The argentine José María “Pechito” López managed to keep his cool in Japan and clinch the title of Champion at the FIA World Touring Car Championship. His lights to flag race 1 victory in Suzuka – the home race also for the Official Tyre supplier of the Championship YOKOHAMA - at the weekend crowned him in front of thousands.

What had begun as an opportunity as third driver for newcomer manufacturer to the Championship “Citroen” turned out to be an exciting triumph in his first full season. He has clearly dominated with 9 wins so far, equalling Yvan Muller’s record number of wins in a season – and Macau is yet to come.

The points obtained with his pole position on Saturday together with Sunday’s race 1, and the untimely retirement of his most competitive team mate due to technical issues, Yvan Muller, meant José María López became the first non-European FIA WTCC champion and the driver that brings back memories of the golden era of Argentina’s Juan Manuel Fangio 57 years later.

Few would have imagined at the beginning of the season that López, would manage to deliver in the way that he has. Fellow WTCC drivers have all highlighted the excitement that López’s triumph has brought to the Championship and have all congratulated his achievement. Although no newcomer to the Motorsport world, with a vast experience in other junior championships in single-seaters and as F1 test driver, most agree that he was in a totally new environment and competing against some of the toughest opposition possible including four times WTCC Champion Yvan Muller and Rally legend Sebastien Loeb.

Suzuka’s celebration for López also follows Citroen’s manufacturers’ Title recently achieved in China.

It still remains to be seen who will be runner-up and third place with contenders Yvan Muller and Sebastien Loeb competing for such recognition and a fantastic culmination to the perfect season for Citroen.

After the racing in Suzuka David Oliva, responsible for YOKOHAMA Europe communications, highlighted the superb season from “Pechito” López and congratulated him and his team on the achievement. “He and his team have been impressive throughout the season, so a big “well done” to them and also respect to the other competitors who have also managed to take some wins and points throughout the Championship and kept the excitement alive”.

From our side as Tyre manufacturer and exclusive tyre supplier to the FIA WTCC Championship, we are extremely happy with the performance of the YOKOHAMA tyres at all the races, which ranged from the hot temperatures of Marrakech, with the season opener to the cold, rainy and adverse conditions encountered at some of the other races.