**Champion López and Sebastien Loeb start strong**

9th March 2015

The current FIA World Touring Car Champion José María “Pechito” López began the defence of his title and new WTCC season with a strong performance on home soil and in front of over 40,000 ecstatic fans. With a first and second place on both races at the Termas del Rio Hondo circuit in Argentina, López is already leading the Championship which has the Japanese Tyre manufacturer YOKOHAMA as the exclusive tyre supplier. Although at face value and in view of the results nothing seems to have changed from last year. There are many considerations that make the new season exciting and high level competition at its best.

Race 1 was action packed. A dynamic Yvan Muller was faster than pole position López at the start, although the current champion took only two corners to overtake and then never left the leading position all the way across the chequered flag. Early clashes among the pack, resulted in some verbal exchanges at the end of the racing weekend in Argentina, particularly between Huff and Bennani.

Yvan Muller managed to finish second in race one followed by Loeb in third completing an impressive Citroen racing team podium. Honda’s Monteiro and Tarquini in 4th and 5th respectively also indicate Honda may have found the pace to compete against Citroen this year.

Race 2 had different protagonists with an amazing display of skill by Sebastien Loeb who had started in 8th and was a dominant force winning the race. Lopez who had started on 10th place at the Grid also managed a meritorious second, whilst Honda driver Tiago Monteiro finished in third place to break the Citroen hegemony at the top.

Norbert Michelisz also provided a slick performance from the back of the grid to earn the coveted YOKOHAMA Drivers’ Trophy in race one with Mehdi Bennani taking the class in race two.

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Jose Maria Lopez 48pts

Sebastien Loeb 43pts

Tiago Monteiro 28pts

The next race will take place in Marrakech, Morocco on the 17th -19th April 2015.