**Sebastien Loeb wins at WTCC Race of France**

30th June 2015

It came as no surprise to see the legendary driver Sebastien Loeb maintain his pole position advantage on the first race at the Paul Ricard circuit in France last weekend. His lights to flag victory on home soil however was not made easy by his Citroen Racing team mates who pressed as much as they could.

Yvan Muller, wishing to keep within sight of current leader José María López, pushed to the limit, although it was clear that Loeb’s car at a par with his colleagues meant only a mistake could provide some opportunity for those in pursuit. Loeb however was fast and focused and continues to gain touring car experience and added a new victory to his incredible motor racing tally.

Loeb, Muller and López smiled as they crossed the line and met in the podium. Another Citroen driver, Ma Qing Hua, settled for fourth with Tom Chilton in fifth and being awarded the YOKOHAMA Trophy win on race 1.

The second part of the racing at “Le Castellet”, brought a little more excitement with the reverse grid positions at the start. A hopeful Bennani however, not able to take the opportunity of his pole and following a jump start and eventual drive through, ruined his chances of glory. The mighty Hungarian dynamo, Norbert Michelisz took immediate advantage of the situation and sped off like greased lightning on his Honda. For 95% of the race, Michelisz was in control, fending off the followers but current World Champion José María López was determined to avoid his overall lead being further reduced by his direct opponents. López climbed places one after another and managed some incredible overtaking in what is a very narrow circuit. A collision with Tiago Monteiro, which also left the Portuguese Honda driver on the lurch, also paved the way for López’s triumph. Towards the end, Michelisz had to concede to López’s faster car and settle for a very good 2nd place with Ma Qing Hua third, Yvan Muller in fourth and Tarquini in fifth.

“Pechito” López’s victory meant that at the end of the French weekend, his lead over Muller has been extended to 39 points and 74 points ahead of third qualified Sebastien Loeb.

A word on the other manufacturer teams, Honda and Lada have certainly picked up their pace in the last races and are now also aspiring to the top slots although the advantage gained in the first half of the season may prove unsurmountable.

For his part David Oliva, Communications Manager for YOKOHAMA Europe, expressed satisfaction at the excellent performance of the tyres throughout the season in both hot and cold conditions. “It is very satisfying to see such high level competition and very gratifying to be part of it as tyre suppliers.” he added.

The FIA World Touring Car Championship continues in the Portuguese city of Vila Real 10th-12th July 2015.