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**END OF SEASON SUCCESS FOR YOKOHAMA IN IRC RALLY CYPRUS**

The IRC Rally Cyprus has been as ‘exciting and tough’ as expected exclaimed Jarkko Nikara, the young finnish driver who has formed part of the YOKOHAMA clad – Subaru Impreza R4, supported by the Tommi Makinen racing team at IRC 2012. Teaming up with defending Production class champion, the experienced Toshi Arai from Japan, both drivers, ably assisted by Jarkko Kallioleppo and Dale Moscatt respectively, started the last race of the season on fire, achieving overall 2nd & 3rd positions in the first stage of what turned out to be a hard battle for survival on the difficult surfaces on the island.

Following the rough stages on the mixed terrain on tarmac and gravel around the beautiful Cyprus, the pair managed an impressive 3rd for Toshi Arai in the overall classification and a very meritorious 4th overall position for Jarkko Nikara.

‘The season has been good in that I have accumulated more experience particularly on some new surfaces for me. I am naturally pleased with some of the results achieved at IRC such as recording some very fast times along the season.’ Added Nikara who on many stages has proved to be an extremely talented and fast driver and on occasions has managed to be at the level and on occasions even faster than some of the S2000 cars in the competition.

Winning the Colin McRae trophy at Zlin in the Czech Republic earlier this year and a good overall 4th position in Cyprus are testament of the determination and undoubtable continuous progression of the young finn. ‘ I would really like to continue having opportunities to do what I love which is racing and continue improving. The partnership with YOKOHAMA and their Motorsports supports team as well as with Subaru and the excellent relationship with the Tommi Makinen Racing has meant we have been very competitive in our class’ and I would like to thank them all for their continuous support and professionalism’ he concluded as he thanked the mechanics, and members of this well oiled partnership between Subaru, YOKOHAMA motorsports and the Tommi Makinen racing team

Meanwhile defending Production class Champion Toshi Arai who managed an impressive 3rd overall in Cyprus expressed his delight at his season’s ending with a podium. ‘It was a very tough race and I am so happy to conclude the season with a podium finish’ he explained shortly after receiving his trophy. Looking back at the season he said the YOKOHAMA tyres had really gone up a level in 2012. ‘I felt that the tyres were even better this year and I could really control the driving in a smoother, easier way. I think we have been able to work together very well and all the team members have been very helpful.

When asked to comment about the future, Toshi Arai explained the next stage would now be discussions with Subaru first and then establish which rally he would be racing in 2013.

For his part David Oliva Project Manager for Motorsports, Marketing and Communications for YOKOHAMA Europe, expressed satisfaction at the good results of the Cyprus rally and thanked both drivers and co-drivers as well as the Subaru/Tomi Makkinen racing team for their efforts throughout the season, without forgetting the YOKOHAMA Motorsports support team. ‘The wealth of information and experience we continue to obtain by participating in top Motorsports racing such as IRC enables us to keep improving and achieving top results.

‘For a company that has been in existence for nearly 100 years, Motorsport is an integral part of our activities. The drive and commitment to continue developing the highest levels of performance in our racing tyres remains paramount and we use this experience from the tracks and circuits to ultimately enhance our technology and provide premium tyres on the roads.