**Exclusive interview with newly crowned FIA WTCC Champion “Pechito” López**

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The performance of José María “Pechito” López, new FIA WTCC Champion, has been outstanding throughout the season. In an exclusive interview with David Oliva, responsible for YOKOHAMA Europe communications, he speaks about his thoughts on the Championship.

Q: What have been the most significant moments of this season for you?

**“If I have to do a ranking from the year - the Nordschleife was the best one, winning the first race, making pole position was a strong performance. Winning the first race of the year in Argentina was a very nice moment and winning in Vila Real was very special. It was a street circuit, a difficult track, the first time in Vila Real that everybody knew was a difficult track.”**

Q: What have been the main challenges?

**“The challenges have been the same – to keep the gap. I knew it was going to be more difficult because, of course, my rivals, especially my team-mates, work harder and they prepare more, they knew me more. Overall it’s been a great season again and I was able to pull a gap straight away and manage it until now. It’s a bit of a surprise for me because I expected a much more tighter season. In the end it was but the consistency was the key, consistency in every race, scoring strong in every race. It was difficult for the others to keep it up.”**

Q: How do you keep your motivation after so many victories?

**“Winning is my motivation. Being competitive is my motivation. I have passion for racing, for competing, trying to overtake and do well every weekend. It’s not very difficult to find the motivation actually. I always feel very motivated and always take one win as it is the last one because I know what it means to be a long time without winning so I appreciate more the moments.”**

Q: What is the challenge for you for the next season?

**“It’s the same as this season. Of course if I can make it in the championship it will be to defend again. We will see what happens because Volvo is coming, the competition will be stronger, my team-mates will be stronger. There are still a few important things to do, to try to make another year with Citroën will be great. We are still discussing but both parts – my side and the Citroën side – the intention is to be together next year but we have to wait a bit while the conversations are taking place. I hope we can be together next year. After that I hope to do well again, keep motivated and try to win.”**

Q: How do you see your partnership with Yvan Muller and Sebastien Loeb?

**“It’s been a perfect partnership. If you see the results I think we worked together and we gave to the team what they needed. We have a competition inside of course, this is normal, we compete and we are in the same car. The competition is quite hard but we never forget the fact we are working for a team as well. So far we have managed to give good points to Citroën and they reach the objective, which is winning the manufacturers’ championship as well. We have done our job. On the track we had our moments thinking we are three and four with Ma, every race we found each other on the race track but we never had any major problems and that’s important.”**

Q: Is success in Motorsports only driving skill?

**“It’s team work. I know more than anyone, if I wouldn’t be in Citroën I wouldn’t be here. Citroën has been so strong. I have an amazing car with so many people working around the car in the factory in a lot of aspects. This is really a team effort. It’s not only because of me, it’s also because the team has done a fantastic job. Of course there are lots of little things to make a plus, like fitness. I always try to work hard and maybe there is someone who works harder than me. But I try to do my best. I am a hard worker and I have never been someone who thinks something comes easy to me. I have always had to work hard. The fact I have very, very strong team-mates who always pushed me and never let me sleep but to try to keep going.”**

Q: What is your advice to young talent trying to make it into Professional Motorsports?

**“The advice I can give as a racing driver with experience and I experienced myself some problems, the main thing is to never give up and always try as hard as you can. Be patient, believe you can do things. It’s not always going to be good. You are always going to have sad moments and difficult moments but these moments are necessary to learn and improve more the nice moments.”**

Q: How does it feel to win your 2nd FIA WTCC title?

**I am so happy. I want to congratulate everybody and thank all the people who have been around me in my career for 23 years, starting with my family, my father especially, my brothers who gave up a lot of things to help me race in Europe, my girlfriend, everybody in Argentina and the team. I wouldn’t be here without them. They gave me the opportunity to race and compete with my team-mates at the same level, my mechanics, my engineer and my team-mates as well for always pushing me. We have had some very nice battles inside the team and we improved the car to a very good level. But this is just a dream, two world championships. It’s something I never expected but somehow life gave this to me so I really thank everything and I look forward to celebrating with my friends. When I say my friends I mean everybody in the WTCC because everybody has been so kind to me.**

Q: What do you think of the YOKOHAMA Tyres you use at WTCC?

**“The Yokohama tyres are great tyres. We never had an issue with the tyres. They are always very equal in the performance between one set and another. They are basically tyres for a world championship, they fit properly for this series. It’s a very fast tyre but you can rely a lot. We never had a major problem with the tyre or something like that. It’s good to work with this kind of brand.”**

Thank you very much!