

## FIA WTCC NEWSLETTER

# 49 – 30 December 2008

### TWO MONTHS TO THE OPENING ROUND

The fifth season of the FIA World Touring Car Championship will get underway in a little more than two months, on March 8<sup>th</sup> in Brazil, at the Autódromo Internacional de Curitiba.

Only 44 days have gone since the final event of the 2008 season, when SEAT and Yvan Muller claimed the World Championship crowns for Manufacturers and Drivers at Macau.

For the third time Curitiba will be hosting the championship's opening meeting and the event will mark the fourth visit paid by the FIA WTCC to the 3.7-km Brazilian racetrack.

The Championship will then move to Puebla, Mexico (March 22<sup>nd</sup>) before inaugurating the new street circuit of Marrakech, Morocco, that will host the season's third race meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Seven European events will follow – from Pau, France (May 17<sup>th</sup>) to Imola, Italy (September 20<sup>th</sup>) – before the two final rounds in the Far East: Okayama, Japan (November 1<sup>st</sup>) and Macau (November 22<sup>nd</sup>).

### KSO CONFIRM INDEPENDENTS' PRIZE MONEY

WTCC promoter KSO and Yokohama, the championship's tyre supplier, have confirmed that independent drivers will compete again for a euro 384,000 prize money during the 2009 season.

The prize money will be awarded to the drivers entered in the Yokohama Independents' Trophy. At each of the season's twelve race meetings, a total of euro 32,000 will be awarded to the top six Independent drivers, classified by adding together the points obtained in the two races:

- to the first driver: euro 12,000
- to the second driver: euro 8,000
- to the third driver: euro 5,000
- to the fourth driver: euro 3,000
- to the fifth driver: euro 2,000
- to the sixth driver: euro 2,000

The point scoring system will be the same as the WTCC: 10, 8, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 points to the first eight drivers classified; however, double points will be awarded in the two races of the final meeting at Macau.

From this year, one additional point will be awarded to drivers setting the Independents' pole position and fastest lap at each round. Three additional points will be also awarded for each point scored in the WTCC overall classification.

Previous winners were Wiechers-Sport's Marc Hennerici (BMW 320i) in 2005, GR Asia's Tom Coronel (SEAT León) in 2006, Wiechers-Sport's Stefano D'Aste (BMW 320si) in 2007 and Proteam Motorsport's Sergio Hernández (BMW 320si) last year.

### **YVAN MULLER FLIES TO ARGENTINA**

The Christmas break is over for the new FIA World Touring Car champion Yvan Muller. The Frenchman will fly on Sunday to Argentina where he will take part in the Dakar rally.

Muller will be at the wheel of a single-seater SMG buggy powered by a 250bhp 6-cylinder boxer Porsche engine, built by Philippe Gache and conceived together with Jean-Louis Schlesser. He was already expected to drive for SMG in the 2008 Dakar, but this did not happen as the event was cancelled a few hours before the start from the organisers due to safety reasons, further to the killing of four French tourists in Mauritania.

The 2009 Dakar will start on January 3<sup>rd</sup> from Buenos Aires and will come back in the Argentine capital city on January 18<sup>th</sup>, after 6,000 km of special stages through Argentina and Chile.

Among the participants is Tom Coronel who will share a Bowler Nemesis car with his twin brother Tim.

### **D'ASTE BACK TO WIECHERS-SPORT**

Stefano D'Aste will re-join Wiechers-Sport for the 2009 FIA World Touring Car Championship.

After he failed to find an agreement with Proteam Motorsport, the 33-year old Italian driver signed a deal with the Germany-based team, with which he clinched the 2007 FIA WTCC Independents' Trophy.

*"That was a very successful season, although we had some understanding problems in the first part of the season. But after the third meeting we sat together to talk and sort out all issues. Afterwards we were able to find the best way of working together and won the title,"* D'Aste commented. *"Now we all are more experienced and I expect to be competitive from the very beginning of the season."*

The Wiechers-Sport team is currently talking to other drivers in order to find a good team-mate for Stefano D'Aste.

**COUNTDOWN: - 68 DAYS**



to the 2009 FIA WTCC Race of Brazil – 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> March in Curitiba