

MOROCCO WINS WTCC SPECIAL AWARDS

Championship promoter KSO established the “WTCC Special Award” to reward the efforts made by the companies involved in developing and promoting the FIA World Touring Car Championship.

The jury, formed of representatives from KSO and Eurosport, decided to exceptionally award two trophies in 2009, to the Marrakech Grand Prix and the Office National Marocain du Tourisme (ONMT) for their joint contribution towards the organisation of the first WTCC Race of Morocco and for supporting local driver Mehdi Bennani to take part in the event.

“Our aim was to give recognition to the whole country through its entrepreneurs and government institutions,” explained Eurosport Events vice-president Jacques Raynaud while handing the awards to Aly Horma and Islam Zahid of Marrakech GP and to Abdelhamid Addou of OMNT.

“We have been honoured to receive such an award. This was not only testament to what we all achieved, with the return of international motorsports to our country and the massive media spotlight on Morocco, but also an indication to what the future holds, as we all believe the event has enormous potential for the future,” commented Islam Zahid and Aly Horma.

While Abdelhamid Addou said: *“The huge success of the first WTCC event in Marrakech shows that our partnership with the Race of Morocco and Eurosport will last for years to come. We are honoured to receive this distinction that promotes the image of a modern and dynamic country.”*

Other nominees for the awards were HSBC, for expanding to the WTCC Race of Mexico the support they were already giving to the WTCC Race of Brazil, and Yokohama, for their even stronger commitment to support the WTCC manufacturers and teams and to introduce eco-friendly technologies in the production of racing tyres.



Abdelhamid Addou of OMNT receives the special award from Jacques Raynaud
Islam Zahid (far left) and Aly Horma of Marrakech Grand Prix attend

MOUNTAIN BIKE INCIDENT FOR VAN LAGEN

LADA Sport driver Jaap van Lagen broke his collarbone during a work out on his mountain bike last Saturday. Van Lagen jumped over a tree and was settling for another jump when his rear wheel got stuck. The Dutchman was thrown in the air and landed on a tree trunk. *"I immediately knew something was wrong,"* he said.

Jaap van Lagen cycled three kilometres with an injured left shoulder to the nearest village before being taken to hospital, where x-rays revealed a multiple fracture to his left collarbone. The LADA driver underwent surgery that same afternoon, his collarbone being fixed with a large metal plate.

"The operation was successful," Jaap said from his hospital bed. *"After six weeks the bone will be fully repaired, but well before that I will be able to practice. And by the start of the WTCC season I will be in great shape again."*

COUNTDOWN: - 79 DAYS



to the 2010 FIA Race of Brazil – 6th / 7th March in Curitiba