

## Hyundai Motorsport confirms first 2016 WRC events for Kevin Abbring in Portugal and Italy

- Hyundai Motorsport has announced its test driver Kevin Abbring is to take part in Portugal and Sardinia rallies as part of a four-car entry for the team
- Abbring will run the latest specification 2015 Hyundai i20 WRC for these two events, which will be the first of three events for the Dutchman in this year's WRC
- Abbring has helped to develop both the New Generation i20 WRC and R5 Customer Project car, running a combined programme of test and competitive kilometres.

Alzenau, Germany

March 15, 2016 – Hyundai Motorsport has today revealed that its test and development driver Kevin Abbring will compete in three rounds of the 2016 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in a fourth car, starting with Rally de Portugal and Rally Italia Sardegna.

The Dutchman will drive the latest specification of the 2015 Hyundai i20 WRC, the same car that Hayden Paddon used in the Monte-Carlo 2016 season opener, wearing the #10. Alongside British co-driver Seb Marshall, Abbring competed in five WRC events last year, showing his potential as he memorably ran as high as second place in Tour de Corse.

Rally de Portugal's gravel terrain will offer a beneficial learning experience for Abbring, who is more experienced in tarmac events. He will then continue his programme at the subsequent event on the 2016 WRC calendar, Rally Italia Sardegna, in June.

The Dutchman hopes to accelerate his learning curve across successive events while striving to achieve the best possible overall result for the Hyundai Mobis World Rally Team. His third competitive rally of 2016 has not yet been decided.

Abbring has spent the start of 2016 carrying out development of the New Generation i20 R5 customer motorsport car for Hyundai Motorsport's new Customer Project. He has also been instrumental in development of the New Generation i20 WRC that has taken two podium results in the three opening rounds of the new WRC season.

Abbring said: *"I am very excited to have the first two of my three rallies this year in Portugal and in*



*Sardinia. The two rallies are right after one another so I should benefit from the momentum going from one event to the next. Obviously, when you are not in the car a lot, you have to prepare everything twice as well. We gained some really positive WRC experience last year, so my objective for Rally de Portugal will be to get into the rhythm as soon as possible and then achieve a top-ten classification. We will be starting with the 2015 car, but that won't matter for these events. I have rallied in Portugal and Sardinia twice each, four or five years ago. It has been a while so I am very excited to be back in the car again. The gravel surface is less known to me but this makes it more exciting. I've got plenty of work now that I can focus on these two rallies. One of my future targets is to do all rallies in the Championship but, for the moment, I have a huge job with developing two cars – the New Generation i20 WRC and the R5 car.”*

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *“We have always thought that it is a good move to have a test driver who also does some competitive kilometres. We agreed with Kevin that this year he would do three rallies in the latest 2015 edition of our WRC car, as part of a four-car programme alongside our three regular crews. At the beginning of the year Kevin was very busy with R5 testing, which was the absolute priority, but now we are a bit further into the season we have more spare time to offer him some WRC events. We have decided on Portugal and Sardinia because they will offer him a useful learning experience on gravel. He'll be driving the same specification Hyundai i20 WRC that Hayden used in Monte-Carlo. It's a car that Kevin already knows well, feels comfortable with and which will offer him the best chance to achieve a good result. He showed his potential in Corsica last year with an eye-catching performance, so we are looking forward to seeing what he can do this season. ”*

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### **About Hyundai Motorsport GmbH**

Established on 19 December 2012, Hyundai Motorsport GmbH is responsible for Hyundai's global motorsport activities and primarily for its World Rally Championship programme. Based in Alzenau on the outskirts of Frankfurt in Germany, the company embarked on its debut season in the FIA World Rally Championship in 2014 with a bespoke team of skilled staff and a brand new car, the Hyundai i20 WRC. The team made a strong impression in its first year claiming podium results in Mexico and Poland, as well as a memorable 1-2 in Germany. In its second season, the team was involved in a closely fought battle for second place in the Manufacturers' Championship, adding more podiums and stage wins to its tally. For its third season in WRC, Hyundai Motorsport has developed a brand new car, the New Generation i20 WRC, which made its rally debut with a podium finish in Rallye Monte-Carlo in January 2016.

Further information about Hyundai Motorsport is available at: <http://motorsport.hyundai.com>

### **Hyundai Motor Company**

Established in 1967, Hyundai Motor Company is committed to becoming a lifetime partner in automobiles and beyond. The company leads the Hyundai Motor Group, an innovative business structure capable of circulating resources from molten iron to finished cars. Hyundai Motor has eight manufacturing bases and seven design & technical centers worldwide and in 2015 sold 4.96 million vehicles globally. With more than 110,000 employees worldwide, Hyundai Motor continues to enhance its product line-up with localised models and strives to strengthen its leadership in clean technology, starting with the world's first mass-produced hydrogen-powered vehicle, Tucson Fuel Cell and IONIQ, the world's first model with three electrified powertrains.

More information about Hyundai Motor and its products can be found at: <http://worldwide.hyundai.com> or <http://www.hyundaiglobalnews.com>

To download high-resolution photos for editorial use, full driver's profiles, as well as other useful press information about the team please refer to:

<https://motorsport.hyundai.com/en/press>

Username : HyundaiWRC

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