

## Hyundai Motorsport pushes for podium in Portugal with four-car entry

- Hyundai Motorsport will field four cars in next weekend's Rally de Portugal as it aims to continue its strongest ever start to a WRC season
- Test and Development driver Kevin Abbring will join regular drivers Hayden Paddon, Dani Sordo and Thierry Neuville for the first of three scheduled WRC events in 2016
- Following its triumph in Rally Argentina last month, the team heads to Portugal in confident mood and aiming for another podium push with the New Generation i20 WRC.

Alzenau, Germany

May 13, 2016 – Hyundai Motorsport will enter four cars into next weekend's Rally de Portugal, round five of the 2016 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), as the bids to continue its impressive start to the season.

Test and development driver Kevin Abbring will make his 2016 WRC debut alongside co-driver Seb Marshall, driving the 2015 specification Hyundai i20 WRC, as used by Hayden Paddon in Rallye Monte-Carlo. He will line-up alongside the team's regular drivers, including Paddon, Dani Sordo and Thierry Neuville – the first time this season that Hyundai Motorsport will have a four-car entry.

Paddon and Sordo will represent the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team in this event, driving the #3 and #4 New Generation i20 WRCs, while Abbring will join Neuville in the Hyundai Mobis World Rally Team. Neuville will contest the rally in the #20 New Generation i20 WRC with Abbring running #10 on the Hyundai i20 WRC.

The team celebrated a popular victory at Rally Argentina with Hayden Paddon and John Kennard clinching their first WRC triumph in spectacular style with a stunning Power Stage win. It was the first rally success for the New Generation i20 WRC in just its fourth event, following podium results in Monte-Carlo, Sweden and fourth-place in Mexico.

Although Hyundai Motorsport has yet to finish on the podium in Portugal, the 2014 event marked an important milestone as Sordo claimed the team's first ever stage win. Since moving to the north of the country for a new-look itinerary last year, the 2016 running of Rally de Portugal will once again



be based at Matosinhos, north of Porto, and will follow a largely unchanged route. The gravel event covers 19 special stages over a total distance of 368km. A new 1.85km street stage will be run twice on Friday evening in the centre of Porto. The event will conclude with three stages on the Sunday morning, including the classic Fafe test.

Tyre choice and management remains a crucial part of the Rally de Portugal strategy while rocks and ruts offer additional hazards on the second pass, which can catch out even the most experienced drivers. All in all, it offers an enthralling challenge with a great atmosphere from the enthusiastic Portuguese and travelling Spanish supporters.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *"We are still on something of a high after our win in Argentina, but we know that Rally Portugal will be another new challenge. We will be running four cars there as Kevin joins us for the first of three WRC rounds this season. He showed his potential with us last year – who can forget his impressive showing at Corsica – but Portugal will give him a chance to increase his experience on gravel. The route for this year's rally is very similar to 2015 so we know that tyres will play a big role. We have learned a lot in this area so will aim to put that into practice. Our New Generation i20 WRC has met our high expectations so far but we're still finding ways to improve the car further. The WRC is very competitive, so we must keep pushing. All four drivers are motivated to do well this weekend. We have had a great start to the season but this is only round five so we have to keep concentrated on the job in hand and get the best out of ourselves. We have shown what we can achieve, so the expectations on us are now much higher."*

All four drivers have had the opportunity to test in Portugal ahead of the rally. Neuville and Sordo carried out two days of running ahead of Rally Argentina in addition to an extra day earlier this week. Paddon took the wheel of the New Generation i20 WRC for two days, while Abbring will also have a solitary day of testing next Monday

Paddon (#3 New Generation i20 WRC) and co-driver John Kennard stood atop the Argentinian podium after a highly competitive rally in which they took maximum points. The Kiwi crew will approach Rally Portugal with renewed vigour and caution, with their sights on a top-three result.

Paddon commented: *"We've finally had chance to take in what happened in Argentina! It's still a great feeling and a weekend I will never forget but we have to push the reset button now, as we prepare for Portugal. We're heading into a string of European rallies where we have a lot more*

*experience. We want to continue with the level of performance we showed in Argentina, fighting more regularly at the front. The New Generation i20 WRC has performed strongly so far but we know where we have more performance to find, and the team is working hard to make improvements rally by rally. I'm excited to see what we can do."*

Sordo (#4 New Generation i20 WRC) will receive plenty of support from the fervent Spanish fans who flock to Portugal to follow the rally. The Spaniard and compatriot co-driver Marc Martí will be chasing their maiden podium of 2016 next weekend.

*Sordo said: "Portugal is one of the most enjoyable rallies of the year for me. Being located so close to Spain, we receive a lot of support from the many spectators who travel over for the rally, as well as the thousands of Portuguese fans who create such a fantastic atmosphere. The new-look rally in the north is a different style to the previous version in the south but we still have some very nice stages. We have had some good results with the New Generation i20 WRC this season so my target is do another solid rally and hope to fight for the podium."*

Neuville (#20 New Generation i20 WRC) took a top-six finish in Argentina in a spirited fight-back. Along with co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul, he will be targeting a trouble-free weekend than he has had in recent rallies.

*Neuville commented: "We have had a few tough rallies recently after our strong start to the season in Monte-Carlo. We are keeping positive, though, and our expectations for Rally Portugal are high. It's still quite a new rally for everyone but we gathered a lot of experience last year, particularly in terms of tyre choice and understanding the roughness of stages on the second pass. We need to focus on getting a good start and quickly finding a rhythm. If the weather is good, then our road position might give us an advantage. It's amazing to see so many supporters in Portugal; I'm looking forward to their support as we aim for a competitive and trouble-free weekend."*

Abbring (#10 Hyundai i20 WRC) and co-driver Seb Marshall took part in five WRC events with Hyundai Motorsport last season. They will join the team for three WRC events this year, starting in a 2015-specification Hyundai i20 WRC in Portugal, alongside their testing duties, which has included development of the New Generation i20 R5.

*Abbring said: "I am very excited to be returning to competitive WRC action. As a test driver, it's good*

*to get competitive kilometres under your belt as well as all the development work, so I can't wait to get started. I have previous experience of rallying in Portugal from JWRC several years ago, but the stages in the north of the country are new to me. It feels a bit like I am starting again but I just have to focus on my driving and do the best job I can for the team. I will be using the 2015 specification Hyundai i20 WRC, which I am familiar with from last year, and which we know has good potential. It's another learning experience for me so we have to take things stage by stage. I really want to finish in the top 10 and score some points, but I see Portugal as a step towards Sardinia where I really hope I can do more."*

### Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

<b><u>New Generation i20 WRC #3</u></b> Chassis number: 005		
	<b>Hayden Paddon</b>	<b>John Kennard</b>
DOB	20 April 1987	11 February 1959
First WRC event	2007, Rally New Zealand	1985, Rally Finland
WRC starts	51	59
WRC podiums	3	4
WRC wins	1	1
Rally de Portugal starts	4	4
Rally de Portugal previous results	2010: 20 <sup>th</sup> (9 <sup>th</sup> class P4), 2011: 11 <sup>th</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> PWRC), 2012: 16 <sup>th</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> SWRC), 2015: 8 <sup>th</sup>	2010: 20 <sup>th</sup> (9 <sup>th</sup> class P4), 2011: 11 <sup>th</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> PWRC), 2012: 16 <sup>th</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> SWRC), 2015: 8 <sup>th</sup>

<b><u>New Generation i20 WRC #4</u></b> Chassis number: 001		
	<b>Dani Sordo</b>	<b>Marc Martí</b>
DOB	2 May 1983	1 October 1966
First WRC event	2003, Rally Catalunya	1992, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	132	167
WRC podiums	38	44
WRC wins	1	3
Rally de Portugal starts	7	7
Rally de Portugal previous results	2007: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2009: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2010: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2012: 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2013: 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2014: Ret., 2015: 6 <sup>th</sup>	1998: 20 <sup>th</sup> (2 <sup>nd</sup> A7 class), 2000: Ret., 2007: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2009: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2010: 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2014: Ret., 2015: 6 <sup>th</sup>

<b><u>New Generation i20 WRC #20</u></b>		
Chassis number: 003		
	<b>Thierry Neuville</b>	<b>Nicolas Gilsoul</b>
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo
WRC starts	63	58
WRC podiums	13	13
WRC wins	1	1
Rally de Portugal starts	5	4
Rally de Portugal previous results	2010: Ret., 2012: 17 <sup>th</sup> (11 <sup>th</sup> WRC), 2013: 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014: 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2015: 38 <sup>th</sup> (12 <sup>th</sup> WRC)	2012: 17 <sup>th</sup> (11 <sup>th</sup> WRC), 2013: 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014: 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2015: 38 <sup>th</sup> (12 <sup>th</sup> WRC)

<b><u>Hyundai i20 WRC #10</u></b>		
Chassis number: 014 (2015)		
	<b>Kevin Abbring</b>	<b>Sebastian Marshall</b>
DOB	20 January 1989	29 May 1988
First WRC event	2007, Rallye Deutschland	2008, Rallye Deutschland
WRC starts	29	27
WRC podiums	–	–
WRC wins	–	–
Rally de Portugal starts	3	1
Rally de Portugal previous results	2009: 19 <sup>th</sup> (2 <sup>nd</sup> JWRC), 2010: 21 <sup>st</sup> (1 <sup>st</sup> JWRC), 2012: DNS	2010: 51 <sup>st</sup> (6 <sup>th</sup> JWRC)

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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. The team registered its first win with the new car in Rally Argentina, the fourth round of the season.

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

#### **About Hyundai Motor**

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://globalpr.hyundai.com/>

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

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

Username : HyundaiWRC

Password : hmsg2013

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