

Hyundai Motorsport looks for back-to-back wins at Rally Argentina

- The 2017 World Rally Championship (WRC) moves to South America next week for Rally Argentina, the fifth round of the 13-event calendar
- Having secured its first victory of the season at Tour de Corse, Hyundai Motorsport is aiming to extend its winning run with more success on the Argentinian gravel
- The team won in spectacular style in Argentina last year. Hopes are high for a similar result in this year's round.

Alzenau, Germany

April 21, 2017 – Following on from its first win of the season at Tour de Corse earlier this month, Hyundai Motorsport is hopeful that it can challenge for victory again at next week's Rally Argentina (27-30 April), the fifth round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC).

The team is in buoyant mood after its positive performance in Corsica, which saw Thierry Neuville take victory honours and Dani Sordo score a podium for third place. The result helped the team realise the potential shown by the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC in the opening rounds of the 2017 season.

Argentina will offer crews the chance to build on recent success at the scene of one of last year's highlights – Hayden Paddon's first ever WRC victory. He and his co-driver John Kennard will once again compete alongside Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul and Dani Sordo/Marc Martí as part of an unchanged Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team line-up.

Gravel switch

Serving as the season's second gravel event after Rally México, Rally Argentina takes place across an array of picturesque locations, from vast pampas plains, to rugged mountain ranges and softer lake-land landscapes.

A fixture on the WRC calendar since 1980, the rally has featured regularly ever since. The itinerary remains largely unchanged from last year's edition, although there have been some notable alterations. Thursday evening's street test in Cordoba city has been extended to 1.75km and now features a new layout with gravel and asphalt roads. Meanwhile, Saturday's Tanti to Villa Bustos stage will run in the opposite direction to 2016.

After four mixed terrain events, Argentina kick starts a series of five consecutive rallies on gravel, which will give all crews the opportunity to build up confidence on the loose surface. With testing prohibited outside of Europe, the Hyundai Motorsport crews have each been behind the wheel of the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC in the region of Arganil in Portugal to prepare for this challenging event.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *"We enjoyed our first win of the season in Corsica, but now we have to reset our focus on our next challenge – a return to gravel. This year's WRC is so competitive we cannot afford to rest for a moment. As we've seen with four different winners in the opening rounds of this season, the Championship is wide open so far. Returning to Argentina, the scene of Hayden's popular win last year, we are optimistic in our ability to compete at the front once again. Our Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC*

is still developing, with room for improvement in all areas of performance, but we have taken a good haul of stage wins in each round of the Championship so far, and we hope that will continue. Our three crews have tested in Portugal to prepare for this rally, which is the first of five consecutive gravel events, and they are all eager to be in the fight."

Crew Notes: Paddon/Kennard (#4 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

Hayden Paddon and co-driver John Kennard will return to the setting of their greatest success when they take to the stages in Argentina. Despite a mixed start to 2017, the Kiwi crew are confident in their abilities on gravel and are keen to get their season back on track.

Paddon said: "When you go back to a rally where you've got good memories, it's very easy to be in a positive frame of mind. I would love to repeat that result again, although I'm obviously under no illusions as to how difficult that it will be. However, once you've won it once, you have to go back with the target of trying to win it again and that's exactly what we are aiming to do. We have a good run of gravel rallies ahead of us and we should have a decent road position, so I'm determined that Argentina will be the real start of my season."

Crew Notes: Neuville/Gilsoul (#5 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

Neuville and co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul have been arguably one of the most competitive crews so far this season. Having scored four stage wins and their first podium of 2017 at this year's previous gravel event in Mexico, the pair will have high hopes that they can repeat their Corsican success.

Neuville commented: "The result from Tour de Corse is still fresh in our minds so we want to carry this feeling forward. Argentina is a completely different challenge to what we faced in Corsica, but we will do our best to pick up some momentum in the Championship with another good performance. Rally Argentina is probably the roughest rally of the season. It's a rally where you need to take extra care in certain sections. The terrain doesn't suit my style of driving perfectly and it is a rally where I have never found too much speed. Yet, this year we are looking forward to it with our Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC. I think we will be much better in these conditions and a lot more comfortable as well."

Crew Notes: Sordo/Martí (#6 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

Sordo and co-driver Marc Martí picked up their first top-three finish of the season in Corsica, making it their fourth podium-scoring season in a row with Hyundai Motorsport. The Spaniards have been impressively consistent in their performances this season, across different terrains, so will be confident in their chances for another strong result in Argentina.

Sordo said: "The rallies in the Americas are always special events for me personally. The roads are really rough and there are always so many spectators. The atmosphere is guaranteed to be fantastic, and we can really feel that support when we are on the stages. It gives us a boost. However, Argentina is an incredibly demanding rally for both car and crew, so we know that we will have to be at our absolute best to secure a good result. We always like to drive in Rally Argentina, so we are excited about our chances. It was great to score our first podium of the season in Corsica, despite it being a difficult weekend. I hope we can make a more confident mark on next weekend's rally and aim for another top-three performance."

Rally Argentina 2017 at a glance

Spanning 357.59km across 18 stages, Rally Argentina sees crews compete on gravel for the first time since Rally México in March, for the first in a run of five gravel events.

Villa Carlos Paz will once again serve as the service park, situated 700km northwest of Buenos Aires and 30 minutes from the city of Cordoba.

The action kicks off with Thursday's Super Special Stage in the streets of downtown Cordoba, before the crews head south on Friday for two loops of the speedy and sandy tracks of the Santa Rosa de Calamuchita valley. Both of these loops will end with another Super Special Stage, this time taking place in a theme park just outside Villa Carlos Paz.

Saturday serves as the event's longest leg, as the Rally moves to the northwest Punita Valley for two identical loops of three stages, seeing teams clock up a distance of 160km.

Sunday's final leg takes place in the rocky roads of the Traslasierra mountains and features classic stages such as the El Condór and Giulio Cesare tests.

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #4		
Chassis number: 003		
	Hayden Paddon	John Kennard
DOB	20 April 1987	11 February 1959
First WRC event	2007, Rally New Zealand	1985, Rally Finland
WRC starts	64	72
WRC podiums	4	5
WRC wins	1	1
Rally Argentina starts	3	3
Rally Argentina best result	1st	1st
Rally Argentina previous results	2011: 9th (1st PWRC)	2011: 9th (1st PWRC)
	2015: 15th	2015: 15th
	2016: 1st	2016: 1st

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #5		
Chassis number: 002		
	Thierry Neuville	Nicolas Gilsoul
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo

WRC starts	76	71
WRC podiums	21	21
WRC wins	3	3
Rally Argentina starts	5	5
Rally Argentina best result	5th	5th
Rally Argentina previous results	2012: 5th	2012: 5th
	2013: 5th	2013: 5th
	2014: 5th	2014: 5th
	2015: Ret.	2015: Ret.
	2016: 6th	2016: 6th

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #6

Chassis number: 001

	Dani Sordo	Marc Martí
DOB	2 May 1983	1 October 1966
First WRC event	2003, Rally Catalunya	1992, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	144	179
WRC podiums	41	47
WRC wins	1	3
Rally Argentina starts	10	12
Rally Argentina best result	2nd	1st
Rally Argentina previous results	2006: 5th	1997: 9th
	2007: 6th	1998: 10th
	2008: 3rd	2003: 2nd
	2009: 2nd	2004: 1st
	2013: 9th	2006: 5th
	2015: 5th	2007: 6th
	2016: 4th	2008: 3rd
	2004, 2012, 2014: Ret.	2009: 2nd
		2012: 12th (10th WRC)
		2014: Ret.
		2015: 5th
		2016: 4th

-Ends-

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 year in WRC, Hyundai Motorsport developed a brand new car, the New Generation i20 WRC. The team enjoyed its most successful season to date in 2016 with two victories (Argentina and Sardinia) and a total of 12 individual podium results, finishing second in the Manufacturers' Championship. With a number of key technical regulation changes introduced for the 2017 season, Hyundai Motorsport has developed a brand new car, the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC, with which it will contest its fourth 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 centres 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:

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