

Hyundai Motorsport upbeat and ready to finish 2017 season on a high

- Hyundai Motorsport aims to conclude its fourth season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) by fighting for victory in Rally Australia
- The team is fielding three Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC cars in the season finale with Thierry Neuville looking to secure second in the Drivers' Championship
- Andreas Mikkelsen and Hayden Paddon also have aspirations of a strong finish as the team prepares to build momentum for the 2018 season.

Alzenau, Germany

November 10, 2017 – Hyundai Motorsport heads to the season finale of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Rally Australia, in positive spirits as the team aims to conclude its fourth year of participation in the sport on a high.

With the 2017 Drivers' and Manufacturers' Championship titles wrapped up by Sebastien Ogier and M-Sport in Wales Rally GB, Hyundai Motorsport can attack the Australian stages with full focus on the event in hand and with an eye firmly on next season.

A three-car line-up will see Hayden Paddon compete in front of travelling Kiwi and passionate Australian fans, Thierry Neuville aiming to secure second place in the drivers' table, and Andreas Mikkelsen defending his victory from twelve months ago.

The 13th and final round of the 2017 season will see crews negotiate tough gravel stages in dusty conditions that starkly contrast with the slippery terrain faced in Wales.

Testing is prohibited outside of Europe, so Hyundai Motorsport will be putting a season's worth of improvement from its Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC into the Australian round of the Championship.

End of chapter four

Having scored three victories in 2017, a total of ten individual podiums, 77 stage wins and 54 Power Stage points, there have been plenty of strong performances for Hyundai Motorsport in its fourth WRC season. Despite missing out on the Manufacturers' title, the team has had another year of solid progress, which it aims to demonstrate in Australia.

Featuring a revised opening day, which mixes known routes with three new stages in the forest, Rally Australia will be far from a walk in the park. Hyundai Motorsport would like to build on its third place podium finish at the event in 2016 with a multiple charge next weekend, and to position itself in contention for overall victory.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *"We approach Rally Australia with every hope and intention that we can deliver a strong all-round team performance. We have all the ingredients to be competitive on the Australian gravel and we will give everything we can to achieve that. We have to accept our second place in the Championship behind M-Sport, but at the same time we can reflect on 2017 as being one of progress and improvement for our team. If we can put all the pieces together in Australia, I hope we can*

not only be in the hunt for victory but also fight for the podium with multiple cars. There are some new stages to tackle this year, in addition to lots of familiar stages. We finished third in 2016 with Thierry and Nicolas, but our sights are set even higher this year. Our rivals will be out to complete the year in the same way, so we need to be at the very top of our game."

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

Alongside his co-driver Seb Marshall, Paddon will benefit from huge support in Australia, with plenty of fans travelling from New Zealand for the rally. A tough season for the Kiwi has delivered a best finish of second in Poland, a result he'd like to emulate 'down under'.

Paddon said: "It is always nice to be heading back to our side of the world. It isn't quite a home event but it is as close as we can get. The support we receive from the fans is unreal and we want to give them a good show – and something to shout about. We are not competing on the public roads as much as previous seasons, with a lot more stages in the forest. That will make the event slightly different but we are confident in our abilities. Finishing the rally in Wales in the top-eight wasn't necessarily the result we wanted, but it gave us good mileage in the car, which we hope will translate positively to Australia."

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

Neuville and co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul moved back up to second in the Drivers' Championship with a fine drive to second overall in Wales Rally GB. Taking five stage wins, including the Power Stage, the Belgians need an equally strong result in Australia to secure their runners-up slot ahead of Ott Tanak.

Neuville said: "Australia is an enjoyable rally, an event where I have finished on the podium a couple of times in the past. It will certainly be nice to finish the season with a great atmosphere and some Australian summer sunshine, My aim for this final rally is clear: to secure our second place in the Championship. We know we have the technical package to compete at the front, so with the addition of a bit of luck I am hopeful we can do what we need to do."

Crew Notes: Mikkelsen/Jæger (#6 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

Mikkelsen and co-driver Anders Jæger head to the Coffs Harbour based event as defending winners, having impressed in Australia twelve months ago. The Norwegian duo narrowly missed out on a podium in Wales last time out, but will be aiming to rectify that in the season finale, their third rally with Hyundai Motorsport.

Mikkelsen said: "Australia is probably my favourite rally of the season, and I have great experiences from the event previously. Winning in 2016 was a great memory and I hope we can be in the mix again with Hyundai Motorsport. It would be an amazing way to end the season, and to prepare for a full-season campaign in 2018. It is always a challenging event, so nothing can be taken for granted. We do have an advantageous starting position, though, which we hope to make the most of. I am looking forward to it!"

Rally Australia at a glance

The 21-stage Rally Australia event, round 13 of the year, covers a total stage distance of 318.33km.

Based at Coffs Harbour, the rally gets underway on Friday morning with some new stages into the Australian forest. Concluding with two runs through the familiar Destination NSW super special, it acts as a suitably demanding prelude to the longest day of the event.

Covering 140km on Saturday, crews will tackle the monster Nambucca test, which at 48.89km is the third longest stage of the season after El Chocolate in Mexico (54.90km) and Antisanti-Poggio di Nazza in Corsica (53.78km).

The final day of action for the 2017 WRC takes place on Sunday with well-known Australian stages, Bucca and Wedding Bells.

-Ends-

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #4		
Chassis number: 003		
	Hayden Paddon	Seb Marshall
DOB	20 April 1987	29 May 1988
First WRC event	2007, Rally New Zealand	2008, Rallye Deutschland
WRC starts	71	39
WRC podiums	5	1
WRC wins	1	-
Rally Australia starts	6	0
Rally Australia best result	4th	-
Rally Australia previous results	2009: 9th (1st class N4)	
	2011: 6th (1st PWRC)	
	2013: 16th (5th WRC2)	
	2014: 6th	
	2015: 5th	
	2016: 4th	

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #5

Chassis number: 008

	Thierry Neuville	Nicolas Gilsoul
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo
WRC starts	84	79
WRC podiums	26	26
WRC wins	5	5
Rally Australia starts	4	4
Rally Australia best result	3rd	3rd
Rally Australia previous results	2013: 2nd	2013: 2nd
	2014: 7th	2014: 7th
	2015: 7th	2015: 7th
	2016: 3rd	2016: 3rd

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #6

Chassis number: 007

	Andreas Mikkelsen	Anders Jæger
DOB	22 June 1989	29 July 1989
First WRC event	2006, Wales Rally GB	2014, Rally de España
WRC starts	86	30
WRC podiums	21	7
WRC wins	3	2
Rally Australia starts	4	1
Rally Australia best result	1st	1st
Rally Australia previous results	2013: 6th	2016: 1st
	2014: 3rd	
	2015: 4th	
	2016: 1st	

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 developed a brand new car, the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC, with which it is contesting its fourth season. The team registered its first win of 2017 at Tour de Corse before following that up with victories in Rally Argentina and Poland.

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:

<http://press.motorsport.hyundai.com/home>

Username: HMSGMedia

Password: Alzenau

For individual information please contact:

Thomas Villette

Phone: +49-151 1135 4339

tvillette@hyundai-ms.com

Nicoletta Russo

Phone: +49-151 1135 4362

nrusso@hyundai-ms.com