

## Hyundai Motorsport wraps up 2017 with Rally Australia win and double podium

- Hyundai Motorsport has concluded its fourth season in the WRC with a fourth victory of the year as Thierry Neuville triumphed in Rally Australia
- Taking 14 stage wins over the weekend, it was one of the team's most competitive rallies of the season - and its first-ever win in Australia
- Hayden Paddon scored the final podium position after inheriting third place in a dramatic Power Stage, having taken a stage win in treacherous conditions earlier on Sunday.

Coffs Harbour, Australia

November 19, 2017 – Hyundai Motorsport has scored its fourth victory of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship with torrential rain and Power Stage drama creating a thrilling final day in Rally Australia.

The Belgian crew of Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul battled through the tough conditions to take a well-deserved win, clinching second place in the Drivers' Championship as a result.

Hayden Paddon and Seb Marshall enjoyed their strongest day of the weekend, finishing in third position to register their second podium finish of the season. They were initially on course to take fourth but were promoted to third after second-placed Jari-Matti Latvala went off in the Power Stage.

Stage wins for Paddon and Neuville brought the total for the weekend to 14 from a possible 19, the most the team has scored in any event in its four-season history.

Andreas Mikkelsen and his compatriot co-driver Anders Jæger completed their third rally with Hyundai Motorsport under Rally 2 regulations after their retirement from the lead on Saturday morning.

The final day of action was scheduled to include five stages, two runs through Pilbara Reverse (9.93km) and Wedding Bells (6.44km), as well as tackling the longer 31.90km Bucca test.

Heavy rain from the start of the day made for challenging circumstances with standing water and unpredictable rainfall making some stages a lottery. Ultimately, conditions were so bad that event organisers were forced to cancel the penultimate stage, the repeat of Pilbara Reverse.

Run in brighter conditions for its second pass, Wedding Bells played host to a thrilling Power Stage. Mikkelsen's fourth place extended Hyundai Motorsport's unbroken run of PS points in all rounds this season.

In one of the most exciting and closely fought seasons in the WRC, the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC performed at a competitive level in most events. Taking victories on gravel and tarmac, on three different continents, and showing versatility across the WRC's incredibly wide range of rally conditions; the car has helped Hyundai Motorsport to underscore its credentials against tough opposition.

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

With their fourth win of the season, Neuville and Gilsoul confirmed their status as the most victorious crew of 2017. Despite not winning the drivers' title, the Belgians emerged as a genuine threat at most events, and completed a competitive season in style.

Neuville said: *"This is a very special victory, and I dedicate it to the whole team. They have been working hard all season long. It hasn't always been easy but they have never given up, so it's a big thank you on a job well done by everyone – not only those at the rallies but everyone at the factory. We obviously missed out on the championship, but we secured second place today and it gives us a massive motivation for next season. It was a tricky final morning and we didn't want to take too many risks, so to take our fourth win of the year is fantastic. It's really the ideal way to end the season. Now, we can enjoy this moment before turning our attention to next year."*

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

A tough season for Paddon saw a best result of second in Rally Poland, but a third place finish in Rally Australia will give the Kiwi and his co-driver Seb Marshall some small solace. A win in the long SS18 Bucca16 stage allowed the crew reiterated the progress they have made this weekend.

Paddon said: *"It has been a difficult season for me. At least we have been able to bring the year to an end with a more representative result. We never want to score a podium through someone else's misfortune, and it's a shame for Jari-Matti, but it's a nice result for us after a tough year. There is some light at the end of the tunnel in terms of finding our feeling with the car. We have found some answers this weekend, which has been the main objective. We were quite lucky with the weather this morning, as we seemed to avoid the worst of the rain in Bucca and could take a stage win. Overall, the car felt better after we made another big change with the diff mapping overnight. We've just been gathering information for the future and were set on bringing the car home safely in third and our second podium of the season."*

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

Mikkelsen and Jæger have shown encouraging potential with Hyundai Motorsport in the past three rallies. The events have allowed the Norwegian pairing to settle into their new surroundings and prepare for a full season campaign in 2018.

Mikkelsen said: *"It was disappointing that we were forced to retire from the lead of this rally on Saturday morning. Having said that, looking at the conditions we had to face this morning, it would have been a challenge to defend that. We were unlucky with the rain in the earlier stages. Even with the wipers on maximum, we couldn't see anything. Still, at least we had a clean finish in the Power Stage and could bring the car home. Whatever the result this weekend, we have shown good pace. It has been a very valuable experience over these past three rallies with Hyundai Motorsport. I know I am in the right place for next season; the car is awesome and the team is fantastic. Let's keep our fingers crossed for a strong championship challenge together next year."*

## Finishing on a high

For Hyundai Motorsport, a dominant Rally Australia weekend has brought the 2017 season to a positive conclusion. With four victories, the team has doubled its win count year-on-year with 91 stage wins representing a notable increase from the 47 it scored throughout 2016.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *"That was exactly what we wanted to achieve! Our first-ever victory in Australia and a double podium is the perfect way to end the season. Thierry and Nicolas have had an outstanding weekend, and demonstrated why they have been the most victorious crew of the season. It was also a strong final day for Hayden and Seb, who were rewarded with an unexpected promotion to the podium after Jari-Matti's issue in the Power Stage. The conditions have been far from easy today, but all crews kept calm and got the best out of themselves. We have taken our highest number of stage wins in a single event, which shows the high level of performance of our Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC on this tricky gravel surface. All in all, we have plenty of positives to take away from this year. It has been one of the most closely contested seasons in WRC. Thanks to our rivals for some exciting battles throughout the season, and a fantastic year of competition. My thanks also to every member of the Hyundai Motorsport team in Alzenau for their individual contributions to our season – and to our partners. Here's to even more success together in 2018."*

## Bring on 2018!

Although the 2017 season is over, thoughts already turn to the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship, which will get underway with Rallye Monte-Carlo on 25-28 January.

The season will be formally launched at a special event during the Autosport International Show in Birmingham, UK on Thursday 11 January.

## Final Overall Classification - Rally Australia

<b>1</b>	<b>T. Neuville</b>	<b>N. Gilsoul</b>	<b>Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC</b>	<b>2:35:44.8</b>
2	O. Tänak	M. Järveoja	Ford Fiesta WRC	+22.5
<b>3</b>	<b>H. Paddon</b>	<b>S. Marshall</b>	<b>Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC</b>	<b>+59.1</b>
4	S. Ogier	J. Ingrassia	Ford Fiesta WRC	+2:27.7
5	E. Evans	D. Barritt	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3:05.6
6	E. Lappi	J. Ferm	Toyota Yaris WRC	+3:49.5
7	K. Meeke	P. Nagle	Citroën C3 WRC	+22:58.4

## 2017 FIA World Rally Championship for Drivers' Standings

After round 13

1	S. Ogier	232
<b>2</b>	<b>T. Neuville</b>	<b>208</b>
3	O. Tanak	191
4	J.M Latvala	136
5	E. Evans	128
<b>6</b>	<b>D. Sordo</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>H. Paddon</b>	<b>74</b>
8	K. Meeke	77
9	J. Hänninen	71
10	C. Breen	64
11	E. Lappi	62
12	<b>A. Mikkelsen</b>	<b>54</b>

## 2017 FIA World Rally Championship for Manufacturers' Standings

After round 13

1	M-Sport World Rally Team	428
<b>2</b>	<b>Hyundai Motorsport</b>	<b>345</b>
3	Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team	251
4	Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team	218

All results remain subject to official FIA confirmation.

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

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>

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