

Hyundai Motorsport Preview: Sardinia

- Hyundai Motorsport will be targeting its fourth consecutive trip to the Rally Italia Sardegna podium next week as the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) continues onto round seven
- The team will be fielding three Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC cars in the event with Andreas Mikkelsen, Thierry Neuville and Hayden Paddon
- Following its victory in Portugal, Hyundai Motorsport leads the WRC manufacturers' championship by 13 points, with Neuville atop the drivers' table with a 19-point advantage.

Alzenau, Germany

June 1, 2018 – Hyundai Motorsport heads to Rally Italia Sardegna, round 7 of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), at the head of the drivers' and manufacturers' classification following a hard-fought victory last time out in Portugal.

The WRC's run of four consecutive gravel events continues on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia, where Hyundai Motorsport has enjoyed plenty of success in previous seasons: a double podium in 2015, victory in 2016 and third place in 2017.

The 20-stage rally offers one of the shortest competitive distances of the season at just 313km. However, the Alghero based event includes plenty of spectacular gravel courses against a backdrop of stunning seaside vistas with high temperatures putting additional stress on crews and cars.

Hyundai Motorsport will field three cars for the Sardinia round with Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger, Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul and Hayden Paddon/Seb Marshall competing in cars #4, #5 and #6 respectively.

As championship leader, Neuville will have the honour and challenge of being first on the road on the opening days. Mikkelsen and Paddon, meanwhile, will be looking to bounce back from a tricky Portugal where misfortune hampered their weekend performances.

The team carried out testing of its Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC in Sardinia after Rally Argentina in early May in preparation of next weekend's event.

Team Principal Michel Nandan commented: *"We were able to compete at a very high level in Portugal with all of our crews demonstrating the pace of our Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC, and stage winning abilities. Like all teams, it was a character-building weekend but we came away with a win and leading both championships. Our target for Sardinia is to build on that, although we know it will be another tough weekend. Thierry will be first on the road, which will immediately put him at a disadvantage, but we hope he can make the best of the situation. For Andreas and Hayden, after a frustrating weekend for them both in Portugal, we hope they will be able to get back onto the pace straightaway and fight at the front. Our car has shown itself to be strong on gravel and we have had a lot of success in Sardinia previously, so we aim to keep our hold on the championship lead heading into the long break."*

WRC Crew Notes: Mikkelsen/Jæger (#4 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Third place in Sweden remains Norwegian crew's best result of the season to date
- Sixth place in drivers' championship

Mikkelsen said: *"Rally Italia Sardegna is a very warm event and it's important to have high concentration; there are many rocks sticking out that can cause punctures or damage. You also need a stable car because the stages are quite narrow and rough with a lot of bumps. We have made improvements to the car on gravel, which has given me an improved feeling, and I felt really comfortable during Rally de Portugal. This is a positive sign for Sardinia where our aim is to catch up some points and improve our position in the drivers' championship, while also helping the team to increase the manufacturers' lead. It will be tough on mind and body, as well as the car and tyres, but we're ready for it."*

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

- Top of the drivers' championship following win in Portugal
- Previous winner of Rally Italia Sardegna in 2016; three consecutive podiums from 2015-17

Neuville said: *"Portugal was the near-perfect weekend for us, as we took 29 out of a maximum 30 points. We now move onto Sardinia, which is one of the most technical events on the calendar, leading the championship. The roads are very narrow and become extremely rough on the second pass. The grip level is quite high on the repeat loop, but we often lack traction on the first run through. They are tricky conditions but the stages tend to suit my driving style and pace notes system. I am able to be very precise and I have been successful there many times in the past."*

WRC Crew Notes: Paddon/Marshall (#6 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Took stage win and twice led the rally in Portugal before retirement
- Previous podium scorer in Sardinia in 2015, long-time event leader in 2017

Paddon said: *"First of all, I am feeling fighting fit after the incident in Portugal and I'm ready to get back down to business. Up to that point, we were able to show a competitive level of performance, taking a stage win and battling for the lead. Rally Italia Sardegna is certainly one of the highlights of the year, located in the Mediterranean with sunny conditions and hot temperatures. The stages are very twisty and challenging. It is a rally I enjoy, and from where I have good memories. I scored my first WRC podium there in 2015 and led the rally in 2017. I would like to finish off what we started last year."*

Bite-size Sardinia

- 20 special stages over a competitive distance over 313.46km
- Action gets started with the Ittiri Arena Show on Thursday evening before a repeated loop of four stages (Tula, Castelsardo, Tergu-Osilo, Monte Baranta) on Friday
- Longest individual day of the weekend takes place on Saturday. Three stages (Coiluna-Loelle, Monti di Ala, Monte Lerno) held in morning and afternoon, separated by the short 1.4km Citta di Ittiri stage
- Monte Lerno contains the iconic Micky's Jump, one of the highlights of the rally
- Rally concludes on Sunday with two runs of the Cala Flumini and Sassari-Argentiera coastal stages, the latter of which is run as the Power Stage

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #4		
Chassis number: 012		
	Andreas Mikkelsen	Anders Jæger
DOB	22 June 1989	29 July 1989
First WRC event	2006, Wales Rally GB	2014, Rally de España
WRC starts	93	37
WRC podiums	22	8
WRC wins	3	2
Rally Italia Sardegna starts	8	2
Rally Italia Sardegna best result	4th	8th
Rally Italia Sardegna previous results	2008: Ret.	2016: 13th (9th WRC)
	2010 (IRC): Ret.	2017: 8th
	2012: 7th	
	2013: Ret.	
	2014: 4th	
	2015: 36th (12th WRC)	
	2016: 13th (9th WRC)	
	2017: 8th	
Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #5		
Chassis number: 010		
	Thierry Neuville	Nicolas Gilsoul
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo
WRC starts	91	86
WRC podiums	31	31
WRC wins	8	8
Rally Italia Sardegna starts	7	6
Rally Italia Sardegna best result	1st	1st
Rally Italia Sardegna previous results	2010 (IRC): 4th	2012: 18th (10th WRC)
	2012: 18th (10th WRC)	2013: 2nd
	2013: 2nd	2014: 16th (11th WRC)
	2014: 16th (11th WRC)	2015: 3rd
	2015: 3rd	2016: 1st
	2016: 1st	2017: 3rd
	2017: 3rd	

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #6

Chassis number: 011

	Hayden Paddon	Seb Marshall
DOB	20 April 1987	29 May 1988
First WRC event	2007, Rally New Zealand	2008, Rallye Deutschland
WRC starts	74	42
WRC podiums	6	2
WRC wins	1	-
Rally Italia Sardegna starts	4	3
Rally Italia Sardegna best result	2nd	12th (IRC)
Rally Italia Sardegna previous results	2014: 12th (10th WRC)	2010 (IRC): 12th
	2015: 2nd	2016: 15th (10th WRC)
	2016: Ret.	2017: Ret.
	2017: Ret.	

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. 2018 represents Hyundai Motorsport's fifth season in the WRC.

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 and technical centers worldwide and in 2017 sold about 4.5 million vehicles globally. With more than 110,000 employees worldwide, Hyundai Motor continues to enhance its product lineup with localized models and strives to strengthen its leadership in clean technology, starting with the world's first mass-produced fuel cell electric vehicle ix35 Fuel cell and IONIQ, the world's first model with three electrified powertrains in a single body type.

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