

Hyundai Motorsport Preview: Rally de España

- Hyundai Motorsport will continue its fight for the title as the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) heads to the mixed surface Rally de España
- Thierry Neuville sits atop the drivers' table with a seven-point advantage while Hyundai Motorsport has the objective to reverse a 20-point deficit in the manufacturers' standings
- Home hero Dani Sordo returns for his first WRC event since Rallye Deutschland, aiming for a third Spanish podium with the team.

Alzenau, Germany

October 19, 2018 – Hyundai Motorsport is ready to put up its strongest fight as the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) moves onto the penultimate event next weekend, the mixed surface challenge of Rally de España.

Hyundai Motorsport heads into round 12 of the 13-event season trailing in the manufacturers' title chase by 20 points with a maximum of 86 available over the final two rallies in Spain and Australia. Thierry Neuville, meanwhile, holds a slim seven-point margin at the top of the drivers' classification.

Despite a string of disappointing weekends compared to its title rivals, Hyundai Motorsport hopes to turn the tide at the popular multi-surface Spanish round. The team will field three Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC crews with home hero Dani Sordo re-joining alongside Neuville and Andreas Mikkelsen.

All sights will be set on fighting for victory at a rally where the team has previously taken three individual top-three finishes. Sordo took third in 2015 before going one place better a year later as part of a double podium with Neuville in third.

Two become one

Often seen as two rallies in one, Rally de España gets underway with a short tarmac test in Barcelona on Thursday evening before moving primarily onto gravel for Friday's stages. A spectacular 75-minute service is held on Friday evening during which mechanics transform the cars into tarmac specification for the Saturday and Sunday.

In order to prepare the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC for the unique challenges of Spain, crews have carried out a mix of tarmac and gravel testing. There has been a particular focus on tarmac performance, something the team has worked hard to improve throughout the season.

Team Principal Michel Nandan commented: *"There is no room for error in Spain, if we are to overturn the deficit in the manufacturers' championship. We still have a mathematical chance to achieve our title goal by the end of Australia. We've seen that anything can happen in the WRC this season, but we also know it will be a big undertaking. We will still give it our maximum. We will also do everything we can to support Thierry in the drivers' title – engineers, mechanics and crews alike. We have a good car, a strong team and competitive drivers; we need to put all elements together and aim as high as we can. It's a privilege to be in such an exciting battle, and the competition is as intense as we knew it would be. We will push right up to the Power Stage in Coffs Harbour. The most deserving team will take the title."*

New territory for HMDP crew

Fresh from their competitive fourth place finish at Wales Rally GB, the Hyundai Motorsport Driver development Program (HMDP) crew of Jari Huttunen and Antti Linnaketo will prepare for a brand new challenge in Spain.

Their seventh WRC2 participation of the 2018 season will mark their competitive debut on the mixed surfaces of Rally de España. The Finnish crew will be seeking to continue their recent progress with the Hyundai i20 R5 against the impressive talent in WRC2.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *“Jari and Antti have made important progress throughout 2018, tackling a combination of familiar and new events. We have seen how well they have fared on rallies where they have past experience – Finland and Wales particularly – but it has been equally important for them to discover new events. Spain will be the next challenge on their learning curve, but we are sure they will get the best out of themselves and the ever-improving Hyundai i20 R5.”*

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

- Strong performances in Turkey and Wales Rally GB unrewarded for Norwegians
- Improved feeling in the i20 Coupe WRC bodes well for Spain

Mikkelsen said: *“We have made important steps in the past few rallies, which have not really been reflected in our overall results. The feeling and rhythm I have had with the i20 Coupe WRC has allowed me to pick up stage wins and to fight at the top end of the field. This is greatly encouraging. Rally Spain could be good for us. I feel that we have made some improvements on tarmac in preparation for this event. We have to see if all our homework pays off. It will be a crucial rally for the championship, so we have to be on top of our game.”*

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

- Leading the drivers' championship by seven points
- Previous podium scorer in Spain (third in 2016)

Neuville said: *“These two final rallies of the season are massively important for us in the championship fight. We have lost some ground in the past couple of events, but we are still on top and we won't give up without a fight. The opening day on gravel will be particularly vital in setting the tone for the rest of the weekend, so we have to start strongly. We know we have had some deficiencies on tarmac this season but we have worked hard on that and hope we can see the fruits of that hard work.”*

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

- First WRC event since Rallye Deutschland
- Spaniards seeking third home podium for Hyundai Motorsport

Sordo said: *“Rally de España is one of the most special events of the whole year for me. Nothing can replace the feeling we get when competing on home soil and in front of such passionate supporters. It makes for a tremendous atmosphere from the opening super special right through to the Power Stage. The gravel-to-tarmac schedule is like no other rally we tackle, and requires a very different approach. It's*

been a long time since Portugal, my last event on gravel, so it will be a tough start even with a beneficial road position. We know the car is strong on loose surface, while we also have some evolutions for tarmac so I hope we can perform stronger than in Germany."

HMDP Crew Notes: Huttunen/Linnaketo (#35 Hyundai i20 R5)

- Fourth in Wales Rally GB, second best WRC2 result of season after Finnish podium
- Aiming to shine in debut Rally de España participation

Huttunen said: *"Wales was arguably the most encouraging WRC2 weekend we've had this year. Of course, we were confident and fast in Finland but at the last event we really put into practice a full twelve months of development and hard work. The improvements have been good but we also know we have more to learn. Spain will be a new event for us, so we will have a bigger challenge against the main WRC2 contenders, who will no doubt set a high benchmark. Our aim is to get as close to them as we can and pick up experience of a mixed gravel/tarmac rally."*

Bite-size Spain

- 18 special stages will be run over a total distance of 331.58km
- The opening super special in Barcelona, a short tarmac test, will pave the way for a day of mainly gravel action on Friday
- The 38.85km La Fatarella-Vilalba stage makes use of the well known mixed surface Terra Alta test from previous years – although run in the opposite direction
- 75 minute service on Friday evening to change the cars from gravel to tarmac specification ahead of 121.80km of stages on Saturday
- A quartet of timed tarmac runs concludes the event on Sunday morning with the second attempt of 14.50km Santa Marina acting as the Power Stage – with invaluable drivers' points up for grabs as the title chase intensifies!

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #4		
Chassis number: 009		
	Andreas Mikkelsen	Anders Jæger
DOB	22 June 1989	29 July 1989
First WRC event	2006, Wales Rally GB	2014, Rally de España
WRC starts	98	42
WRC podiums	22	8
WRC wins	3	2
Rally de España starts	8	4
Rally de España best results	1st	18th (10th WRC)
Rally de España previous results	2007: 25th (16th A8 class)	2014: Ret.
	2008: 8th	2015: 48th (7th JWRC)
	2012: 21st (6th class 2)	2016: Ret.
	2013: Ret.	2017: 19th (10th WRC)
	2014: 7th	
	2015: 1st	
	2016: Ret.	
	2017: 18th (10th WRC)	
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	96	91
WRC podiums	33	33
WRC wins	9	9
Rally de España starts	7	6
Rally de España best results	3rd	3rd
Rally de España previous results	2009: Ret.	2012: 12th
	2012: 12th	2013: 4th
	2013: 4th	2015: 6th
	2015: 6th	2015: 8th
	2015: 8th	2016: 3rd
	2016: 3rd	2017: Ret.
	2017: Ret.	

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #6		
Chassis number: 015		
	Dani Sordo	Carlos del Barrio
DOB	2 May 1983	15 August 1968
First WRC event	2003, Rally Catalunya	1991, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	158	84
WRC podiums	44	9
WRC wins	1	1
Rally de España starts	15	16
Rally de España best results	2nd	4th
Rally de España previous results	2003: 18th (2nd N4 class),	1991: 12th
	2004: 20th (6th A6 class)	1992,1995: Ret.
	2006-2009: 2nd	1996: 15th
	2010: 3rd	1997-1998: Ret.
	2012: 9th	1999: 39th (6th A7 class)
	2013: Ret.	2000: Ret.
	2014: 5th	2002: 12th
	2015: 3rd	2004: 20th (6th A6 class)
	2016: 2nd	2005: 4th
	2017: 15th (8th WRC)	2006: Ret.
		2007: 20th (1st A7 class)
		2011: 4th
		2012: 9th
		2013: Ret.
Hyundai i20 R5 #37		
Chassis number: 026		
	Jari Huttunen	Antti Linnaketo
DOB	28 February 1994	29 October 1979
First WRC event	2015, Rally Finland	2010, Rally Finland
WRC starts	10	13
WRC 2 podiums	2	2
WRC 2 wins	1	1
Rally de España starts	0	0
Rally de España best results	-	-
Rally de España previous results	-	-

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. 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>

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