

Hyundai Motorsport Preview – Round 9: Rally Finland

- The FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) returns from its summer break with one of the fastest and toughest events of the year – Rally Finland, round nine of the 2019 season
- Hyundai Motorsport currently leads the manufacturers' championship by 44 points, with Thierry Neuville only seven points away from the lead of the drivers' standings
- A new crew line-up for Finland sees Craig Breen/Paul Nagle join Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul and Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger-Amland in the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC cars.

Alzenau, Germany

July 26, 2019 – Hyundai Motorsport returns from the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) summer break determined to defend its lead in the manufacturers' standings, as the 2019 season heads to Rally Finland, round nine of the 14-event calendar.

The team enjoyed a competitive result at Rally Italia Sardegna last month, taking victory and third place to extend its advantage in the classification. The aim is to pick up where it left off at one of the most exciting but demanding events of the year.

Rally Finland, the fifth consecutive gravel event, is notorious for being the fastest on the calendar. Even the smallest of mistakes can be costly with fractions of seconds making a big difference on the timesheets. Crews will have to trust in their pace notes and fully commit; the Rally Finland challenge includes blind crests and jumps moving immediately into fast corners, and wide-open roads giving way to narrower and technical sections.

Hyundai Motorsport will field a revised three-crew line-up for Finland with Irishmen Craig Breen and Paul Nagle stepping into the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC alongside Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul and Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jæger-Amland.

All three crews have had the opportunity to test on Finnish roads ahead of the rally in order to prepare as diligently as possible. Mikkelsen and Breen also participated in the Rally Estonia WRC promotional event earlier this month on fast and flowing roads similar to those which will be faced in Finland.

Team Director Andrea Adamo said: *"We return from the summer break, but we have been continuing to prepare ourselves for the challenges that await in this second part of the season. Finland will offer us a very stern test, one which we need to tackle head-on. We have made a slight change to our crew composition for this rally, bringing in the experience of Craig and Paul to support our championship efforts alongside Thierry/Nicolas and Andreas/Anders. Meanwhile, we have also been working hard on the i20 Coupe WRC to prepare it for Finland's high-speed gravel roads. It is a rally like no other and we want to be in the mix from the start."*

Crew Notes: Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (#11 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Belgian crew maintaining pressure in the drivers' championship, seven points from lead
- Crew aiming to make headway with a strong Finnish weekend



Neuville said: *"Finland is a challenging event, and one I enjoy driving. You have a lot of good sensations in the car and a lot of adrenaline, especially after the huge jumps. It's what we drivers really love and I'm hoping it will be a good event for our team this year, as we aim to defend our manufacturers' position. We are also only seven points from first place in the drivers' championship, and our aim is to close that gap even further in Finland."*

Crew Notes: Andreas Mikkelsen / Anders Jæger-Amland (#89 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Podium at Rally Italia Sardegna showed Norwegians' competitive edge
- A strong second place in Estonia acted as perfect preparation for Finland

Mikkelsen said: *"The road profiles in Finland are so different to any other rally: the surface is really hard. A lot of the roads are quite wide and it's very fast with a lot of blind crests and jumps, so you have to be very committed and trust your pace notes. When you feel comfortable there, it's the most beautiful rally in the world – but if you don't, it's the worst place on earth. We want to be back fighting at the front of the pack, just as we were in Sardinia."*

Crew Notes: Craig Breen/Paul Nagle (#42 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Irish crew set for their debut with Hyundai Motorsport
- Breen took his maiden WRC podium at the 2016 edition of Rally Finland

Breen said: *"Rally Finland is very close to my heart. It's the event I've done the most and this year marks ten years since I first competed there. I have a lot of amazing memories from the start of my career and my first podium there in 2016. It's a rally I always enjoy with fast roads and flying in the forests. I'm really looking forward to it this year in the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC."*

Weekend at a glance

- 23 stages run over a competitive distance of 307.58km
- Action begins with 2.31km sprint Harju 1 in central Jyväskylä
- Friday covers ten stages totalling a distance of 126.55km in the west
- Saturday is the longest distance of the rally, with eight stages spanning 132.98km
- On Sunday crews will move east for two classic stages: Laukaa and the big jumps of Ruuhimäki are each repeated once.

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #11		
Chassis number: 017		
	Thierry Neuville	Nicolas Gilsoul
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo
WRC starts	105	101
WRC podiums	38	38
WRC wins	11	11
Rally Finland starts	7	7
Rally Finland best result	2nd	2nd
Rally Finland previous results	2012: 16th	2012: 16th
	2013: 2nd	2013: 2nd
	2014: Ret.	2014: Ret.
	2015: 4th	2015: 4th
	2016: 4th	2016: 4th
	2017: 6th	2017: 6th
	2018: 9th	2018: 9th
Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #89		
Chassis number: 018		
	Andreas Mikkelsen	Anders Jæger-Amland
DOB	22 June 1989	29 July 1989
First WRC event	2006, Wales Rally GB	2014, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	106	50
WRC podiums	24	10
WRC wins	3	2
Rally Finland starts	9	3
Rally Finland best result	4th	7th
Rally Finland previous results	2007: 12th	2015: 22nd (3rd JWRC)
	2008: 12th	2016: 7th
	2011: Ret.	2018: 10th
	2012: 27th (10th class 2)	
	2013: 10th (8th WRC)	
	2014: 4th	
	2015: Ret.	
	2016: 7th	
	2018: 10th	

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #42

Chassis number: 019

	Craig Breen	Paul Nagle
DOB	2 February 1990	29 August 1978
First WRC event	2009, Rally de Portugal	2004, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	59	81
WRC podiums	2	12
WRC wins	-	5
Rally Finland starts	9	6
Rally Finland best result	3rd	1st
Rally Finland previous results	2009: 26th (1st class N3)	2011: Ret.
	2010: 19th (10th class N4)	2012: Ret.
	2011: 2nd WRC Academy	2014: 3rd
	2012: Ret.	2015: 17th (12th WRC)
	2014: Ret.	2016: 1st
	2015: Ret.	2017: 8th
	2016: 3rd	
	2017: 5th	
	2018: 8th	

About Hyundai Motorsport GmbH

Established on 19 December 2012, Hyundai Motorsport GmbH is responsible for Hyundai's global motorsport activities, including the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) and Customer Racing projects. In WRC, Hyundai Motorsport quickly established a strong reputation taking victory in its debut season in 2014. The team amassed ten wins up to the end of the 2018 season and finished as runners-up in the manufacturers' championship on three consecutive occasions. Since the establishment of its Customer Racing activities in September 2015, Hyundai Motorsport has become a trusted partner for teams and drivers looking for success on the rally stages or on racetracks around the world. From its competitive i20 R5 rally car to the competitive i30 N TCR, Hyundai Motorsport-built cars have claimed victory in several championships, including national rally series in France and Spain, as well as the teams' and drivers' titles in the inaugural FIA World Touring Car Cup (WTCR) season. Unified under Hyundai Motorsport, WRC and Customer Racing are together playing instrumental roles in driving Hyundai's global high-performance N brand, and are supporting an important perception shift for the Hyundai brand around the world.

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 with its range of world-class vehicles and mobility services offered available in more than 200 countries. Employing more than 110,000 employees worldwide, Hyundai sold more than 4.5 million vehicles globally. Hyundai Motor continues to enhance its product line-up with vehicles that are helping to build solutions for a more sustainable future, such as NEXO – the world's first dedicated hydrogen-powered SUV.

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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