**Hyundai Shell World Rally Team ready to tackle mixed surfaces at Rally de España**

* Hyundai Shell World Rally Team will contest RallyRACC Catalunya – Costa Daurada, Rally de España next week, the penultimate round of the 13-event FIA World Rally Championship and the only mixed surface event of the season.
* Thierry Neuville (#7 Hyundai i20 WRC) and Dani Sordo (#8 Hyundai i20 WRC) will once again represent the Hyundai Motorsport team, while Hayden Paddon (#20 Hyundai i20 WRC) will score points for Hyundai Motorsport N.
* A comprehensive test on both surfaces was carried out by the team last week to prepare for Rally de España, with all three drivers behind the wheel of the Hyundai i20 WRC.

Alzenau, Germany

October 17, 2014 – The Hyundai Shell World Rally Team is gearing up for the penultimate round of the 2014 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) – and the only mixed surface event of the season – RallyRACC Catalunya – Costa Daurada, Rally de España next week.

Three Hyundai i20 WRC cars will tackle the combination of gravel and asphalt stages with Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul driving the #7 car, local heroes Dani Sordo and Marc Martí with the #8 and Kiwis Hayden Paddon and John Kennard, who make their return to the #20 Hyundai i20 WRC.

The rally will be based in the coastal town of Salou, with the first day of competition on Friday held on gravel roads (with SS4/7 Terra Alta run on mixed surface) and the last two days on tarmac stages. Rally de España represents a challenge for crews and technicians alike; after the six gravel stages on Friday, the team will have to adapt the three Hyundai i20 WRCs to asphalt running. In addition to all the normal repair and set-up work, the mechanics will change the transmissions, brakes and suspensions on the cars in just 75 minutes.

The Hyundai Shell World Rally Team prepared for the rally by carrying out a short gravel test with Sordo and a longer tarmac test with all three drivers in Spain last week, to adapt to the specific type of sealed surface for this event. Unlike Germany and France, the tarmac in the area of the rally is smooth and abrasive, and the roads are similar to a racing circuit in some places, requiring a stiffer set-up.

The main objective for the rally remains a three-car finish, but the team will use the rally to fully evaluate its performance level on tarmac.

Team Principal Michel Nandan commented: *“Rally de España will be a big challenge not only for the drivers but for the entire team as it is like two rallies in one with stages on both gravel and tarmac. Friday night’s service will be tough for our engineers and mechanics as they have to prepare the car for tarmac in only 75 minutes. With this being the last tarmac rally of the season we will ask our drivers to push more to see what level we have reached since France and the pre-event test. Of course we are not expecting to be right at the top because this is still a development season for us but it would be good to see Dani, Thierry and Hayden go for it a little bit more without compromising our key objective, which is – as always - to learn as much as possible for the future by getting all our cars to the finish.”*

Neuville, who finished fourth in Spain last year, will look at making the most of his previous experiences at the event and to bring home another positive result for the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team.

Neuville said: *“As it is the only mixed surface event of the year, Rally de España is certainly a lot different to the other rallies we contest during the season. We tested on tarmac to accumulate more kilometres on this surface with the Hyundai i20 WRC and to find the best set-up possible for the specific kind of asphalt we will find in Spain. We will head to this rally with the objective of finishing the event without any problems and we will try to keep a good pace throughout the weekend. Nicolas and I learned a lot last year from this rally and we will do our best for another positive performance.”*

On his 12th outing at his home rally, local hero Sordo is eager to continue the series of positive results he has achieved on tarmac this year with the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team. Running on home soil will give an extra boost to the Spaniard, who will have lots of fans and supporters cheering for him on the stages.

Sordo commented: *“There is always a great atmosphere at Rally de España and the tarmac stages are very nice and fast. Of course, it’s special for Marc and me as we will have a lot of support from the spectators. We have the first day on gravel and I prefer it like this; my position in the championship means I will have a good starting order and, hopefully, a cleaner road surface, which could help the overall result. It’s not so hard to switch to tarmac for the final two days because you are going from not so much to plenty of grip. It’s actually harder the other way around.”*

Young New Zealander Paddon made his debut in a World Rally Car in last year’s Rally de España, finishing in a remarkable eighth place, while this year the rally marks his debut on tarmac with the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team.

Paddon commented: *“It’s great to return to Rally de España, a rally I’ve done a few times before and that I particularly enjoy. John and I will tackle the rally with our feet on the ground as it will be our first time on tarmac with the Hyundai i20 WRC so there’s a lot to learn and to take in but we’ve done a good test and preparations for the event and I think we’re up to the task. The gravel stages on Friday might be a challenge so we will take them easy before we push a bit more on the nice fast and flowing tarmac stages on the final two days. These are stages on which I feel comfortable, it’s only a matter of getting a good feeling with the car - I think if I can do that quite quickly in the event, we should be able to get a good result.”*

With the Service Park and Headquarters based at the Port Aventura Resort, Rally de España will officially kick off on Thursday 23 October in Barcelona with a Super Special Stage held in the Montjuic area. Friday 24 October will see the competitors tackle six gravel stages and a mixed surface stage before switching to tarmac for Saturday and Sunday for a total itinerary of 372 competitive kilometres. To celebrate its 50th edition, the rally will feature a 50km stage on Saturday (SS9/11 Escaladei), one of the longest in the Championship this year.

**Hyundai Shell World Rally Team Crews’ Info**

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| **Hyundai i20 WRC #7**  Chassis number: 005 |  |  |
|  | **Thierry Neuville** | **Nicolas Gilsoul** |
| DOB | 16 June 1988 | 5 February 1982 |
| First WRC event | 2009, Rally Catalunya | 2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo |
| WRC starts | 44 | 39 |
| WRC podiums | 10 | 10 |
| WRC wins | 1 | 1 |
| Rally de España starts | 3 | 2 |
| Rally de España previous results | 2009: Ret., 2012: 12th, 2013: 4th | 2012: 12th, 2013: 4th |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hyundai i20 WRC #8**  Chassis number: 004 |  |  |
|  | **Dani Sordo** | **Marc Martí** |
| DOB | 2 May 1983 | 1 October 1966 |
| First WRC event | 2003, Rallye Catalunya | 1992, Rallye Catalunya |
| WRC starts | 115 | 150 |
| WRC podiums | 37 | 43 |
| WRC wins | 1 | 3 |
| Rally de España starts | 11 | 18 |
| Rally de España previous results | 2003: 18th (2nd N4 class), 2004: 20th, 2005: 12th (1st JWRC), 2006: 2nd, 2007: 2nd, 2008: 2nd, 2009: 2nd, 2010: 3rd, 2011: 4th, 2012: 9th, 2013: Ret. | 1992: 21st, 1993: 10th, 1995: 7th, 1996: 8th, 1997: Ret., 1998: 15th (5th A7 class), 1999: Ret., 2000: Ret., 2001: Ret., 2002: Ret., 2003: 7th, 2004: 3rd, 2005: 12th (1st JWRC), 2006: 2nd, 2007: 2nd, 2008: 2nd. 2009: 2nd, 2010: 17th (4th N4 class) |

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| **Hyundai i20 WRC #20**  Chassis number: 007 |  |  |
|  | **Hayden Paddon** | **John Kennard** |
| DOB | 20 April 1987 | 11 February 1959 |
| First WRC event | 2007, Rally New Zealand | 1985, Rally Finland |
| WRC starts | 33 | 41 |
| WRC podiums | - | - |
| WRC wins | - | - |
| Rally de España starts | 3 | 3 |
| Rally de España previous results | 2013: 8th, 2012: 20th (5th SWRC), 2011: 34th (8th PWRC) | 2013: 8th, 2012: 20th (5th SWRC), 2011: 34th (8th PWRC) |

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**About Hyundai Motor Company**

Established in 1967, Hyundai Motor Company is committed to becoming a lifetime partner in automobiles and beyond. The company, which leads the Hyundai Motor Group, an innovative business structure capable of circulating resources from molten iron to finished cars, offers top-quality best-sellers such as Elantra, Sonata and Genesis. Hyundai Motor has seven manufacturing bases and seven design & technical centers outside of South Korea and in 2013, sold 4.73 million vehicles globally. With almost 100,000 employees worldwide, Hyundai Motor continues to enhance its product line-up with localized models and strives to strengthen its leadership in clean technology, starting with the world’s first mass-produced hydrogen-powered vehicle, ix35 Fuel Cell.

More information about Hyundai Motor and its products can be found at: <http://worldwide.hyundai.com> or <http://www.hyundaiglobalnews.com>

**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 has 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.

Further information about Hyundai Motorsport is available at: <http://motorsport.hyundai.com>