

Hyundai Motorsport Preview: Round 1 – Rallye Monte-Carlo

- Hyundai Motorsport ready for its sixth season in WRC with three crews and a new-look Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC
- Team aims to get championship off to a strong start at one of the most unpredictable, yet iconic events of the year
- Monte-Carlo has never been a strong event for Hyundai Motorsport with just one podium result to its name – third place for Thierry Neuville in 2016.

Alzenau, Germany

January 18, 2019 – Hyundai Motorsport will be aiming to get its sixth season in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) off to a positive start when the championship gets underway at Rallye Monte-Carlo next week.

One of the most iconic and demanding events on the calendar, this year's Monte will feature a fresh route with up to 40% of the stages remodeled compared to 2018. Yet, the unique challenges of the rally will remain with late evening stages, unpredictable icy and snowy conditions and complex tyre strategies all combining to offer a punishing start to the new season.

Hyundai Motorsport's crews are well versed in the demands of the classic rally. Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul took the team's only Monte-Carlo podium in 2016 finishing third, just one place behind Andreas Mikkelsen and Anders Jæger-Amland whose second place represents the Norwegians' best result at the event to date. Hyundai Motorsport's latest crew needs no introduction to the rigours of Rallye Monte-Carlo: Sébastien Loeb and Daniel Elena will begin a new chapter in their illustrious WRC career at an event they have won seven times previously.

Game on!

All three crews will have had the opportunity to test the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC ahead of Monte, albeit with differing preparation time. Neuville and Mikkelsen got behind the wheel ahead of the WRC season launch in Birmingham at the beginning of January and this weekend, while Loeb will have a test on Sunday prior to recce. The team has sought to offset the reduced pre-event test time by conducting a thorough seat fitting for the nine-time world champion during a recent visit to its Alzenau factory.

The event begins on Thursday evening with a ceremonial start in Gap acting as a prelude to two night stages, each just over 20km in length. It will be a baptism of fire for all crews as battle commences for an all-new season.

Friday's itinerary covers 125km of special stages on new routes, before the final two days return to more familiar settings. If crews can successfully negotiate the opening three days, the legendary Col de Turini awaits on the final morning. Huge crowds will gather at the summit to watch the WRC cars as the rally builds to its crescendo with a final Power Stage against the mountainous pass of Col de Braus.



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

- 2018 championship runners-up have their sights set on a competitive Monte-Carlo
- Previous best result at the event was a third-place finish in 2016

Neuville said: *"We are revved up and determined to get the 2019 WRC season off to the best start possible. The tricky, demanding nature of Rallye Monte-Carlo is well documented. The combination of tarmac roads with unpredictable snow and ice conditions makes it a rally like no other. It is an event I enjoy. We've built up competitive pace in recent seasons, even if the results have not really been there. I expect – and hope – to fight for the podium, and I will even be looking to go for the victory if at all possible. There will be lots of strategies at play, especially with tyres, and we will need to be absolutely precise with our notes. We will give it our best shot and aim to get a good haul of points to start our 2019 championship campaign."*

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

- Mikkelsen took third place in 2015 and second, with Jæger-Amland, in 2016
- Norwegian crew is targeting an improved season after a character-building 2018

Mikkelsen said: *"Here we go again, starting a brand new championship with two of my favourite events in a row – Monte-Carlo and Sweden. Anders and I have worked hard over the winter to learn from our first full season as a Hyundai Motorsport crew, as we aim to build a consistent and strong assault for 2019. Monte-Carlo is always a special rally, and a very difficult one to begin the year. I have often been quick in this event, having taken two podiums. We were also competitive in 2018, despite the final result, scoring a stage win and Power Stage points. Hopefully, we can get a positive start to the new season against another strong field of WRC entries."*

Crew Notes: Sébastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (#19 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Nine-time champions join Hyundai Motorsport for a six-rally program in 2019
- Monte-Carlo winners on seven occasions between 2003 and 2013

Loeb said: *"Rallye Monte-Carlo is one of our favourites. Daniel, my co-driver, is Monegasque, so it's his home rally for him, while it is also something of a home event for me as all of the stages are in France. Conditions can affect the road a lot at Monte, whether it's full tarmac, snow or ice. The most complicated thing is to find the right rhythm and not to fall into any traps: there is every possibility of finding ice plates as the temperature drops overnight. You always have to adapt to the changing and unpredictable conditions. I have always been quite good in these circumstances. This year will be a particularly special one with a new team and a new car. We won't have had a lot of testing time ahead of the rally, and there are lots of tough, new stages for me, but I am very motivated."*

Team Director Andrea Adamo: *"We begin a new season in a refreshed state of mind and looking ahead to what promises to be another exciting, competitive and adrenaline-fuelled championship. The recent season launch in Birmingham revealed the new line-up of WRC cars for 2019 and plenty of ambition from all teams and crews. Monte-Carlo is the perfect place for battle to commence. Our objective and desire is to be in the fight for the manufacturers' and drivers' titles this year. To do that we have to take each rally as it comes, making sure we get absolutely everything out of ourselves on each kilometre of every stage. There's no room for complacency or error, so we have to be rigorous, we must be focused and we have to work together as a team to deliver for Hyundai at the highest level of world rallying."*

Rallye Monte-Carlo begins on Thursday, January 24 with a shakedown at Gap, run over a 3.35km route, before the ceremonial start in the centre. Two evening stages will follow, run in darkness with additional light pods affixed to the cars, the 20.76km La Breole-Selonnet and 20.59km Avançon-Notre Dame du Laus tests. It's game on for the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship!

Hyundai Motorsport Crews' Info

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #11		
Chassis number: 016		
	Thierry Neuville	Nicolas Gilsoul
DOB	16 June 1988	5 February 1982
First WRC event	2009, Rally Catalunya	2007, Rallye Monte-Carlo
WRC starts	97	93
WRC podiums	33	33
WRC wins	9	9
Rallye Monte-Carlo starts	8	9
Rally Monte-Carlo best results	3rd	3rd
Rally Monte-Carlo previous results	2011: Ret. (IRC)	2007: 28th (8th group N)
	2012: Ret.	2011: 36th (1st A6 class - IRC)
	2013: Ret.	2012: Ret.
	2014: Ret.	2013: Ret.
	2015: 5th	2014: Ret.
	2016: 3rd	2015: 5th
	2017: 15th (8th WRC)	2016: 3rd
	2018: 5th	2017: 15th (8th WRC)
		2018: 5th

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #89		
Chassis number: 012		
	Andreas Mikkelsen	Anders Jæger-Amland
DOB	22 June 1989	29 July 1989
First WRC event	2006, Wales Rally GB	2014, Rally Catalunya
WRC starts	100	44
WRC podiums	22	8
WRC wins	3	2
Rallye Monte-Carlo starts	6	4
Rally Monte-Carlo best results	2nd	2nd
Rally Monte-Carlo previous results	2011: Ret. (IRC)	2015: 25th (3rd JWRC)
	2014: 7th	2016: 2nd
	2015: 3rd	2017: 7th (1st WRC2)
	2016: 2nd	2018: 13th (10th WRC)
	2017: 7th (1st WRC2)	
	2018: 13th (10th WRC)	
Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC #19		
Chassis number: 015		
	Sébastien Loeb	Daniel Elena
DOB	26 February 1974	26 October 1972
First WRC event	1999, Rallye Catalunya	1999, Rallye Catalunya
WRC starts	172	172
WRC podiums	117	117
WRC wins	79	79
Rallye Monte-Carlo starts	11	11
Rally Monte-Carlo best results	1st	1st
Rally Monte-Carlo previous results	2001: 15th (2nd A6 class)	2001: 15th (2nd A6 class)
	2002: 2nd	2002: 2nd
	2003: 1st	2003: 1st
	2004: 1st	2004: 1st
	2005: 1st	2005: 1st
	2006: 2nd	2006: 2nd
	2007: 1st	2007: 1st
	2008: 1st	2008: 1st
	2012: 1st	2012: 1st
	2013: 1st	2013: 1st
	2015: 8th	2015: 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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