**Hyundai Shell World Rally Team travels Down Under for Rally Australia challenge**

* Shortly after its 1-2 victory at Rallye Deutschland, the Hyundai Shell WRT moves to the Southern Hemisphere for Rally Australia, round 10 of the FIA World Rally Championship
* Local hero Chris Atkinson (Hyundai i20 WRC #8) joins lead driver Thierry Neuville (Hyundai i20 WRC #7) in the Hyundai Motorsport entry, while Kiwi Hayden Paddon return to the #20 car representing the Hyundai Motorsport N team
* Atkinson and Paddon used a test in France to get acquainted with the Hyundai i20 WRC on gravel for Rally Australia.

Alzenau, Germany

September 5, 2014 - After clinching an historic 1-2 victory at home in Rallye Deutschland last month, the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team now heads to Australia for round ten of the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) – which marks the return of the series to loose surface.

Rally Australia is the furthest the team travels for a WRC event, which poses a number of logistical challenges. The team had just a few days after returning from Rallye Deutschland to prepare all air freight, including cars and all parts, for Australia.

The Alzenau-based squad will tackle Rally Australia with three Hyundai i20 WRC cars. Rallye Deutschland winners and the team’s lead crew Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul will once again be behind the wheel of the #7 car, while local hero Chris Atkinson (co-driver Stéphane Prévot, Hyundai i20 WRC #8) will be back with the team for the first time since Rally Mexico back in March. Kiwis Hayden Paddon and John Kennard will return with the Hyundai i20 WRC #20 representing the Hyundai Motorsport N team.

The stages at Rally Australia represent a mix of hard base roads, some of them narrow and twisty, and with other faster and more flowing sections with roadside trees making position and pace-notes vital.

The team carried out some running in the French region of Vosges possessing similar road conditions to Rally Australia with Atkinson and Paddon, in order to get both drivers up to speed and to prepare the Hyundai i20 WRC for the rally.

Despite claiming its first and second place victory just over one-and-a-half year since the establishment of Hyundai Motorsport, the team is keeping its feet firmly on the ground. The team’s primary objective for Australia is to complete the rally with three cars and to continue its debut season of learning.

Team Principal Michel Nandan commented: *“Rally Australia is not an event as specialised as Finland, for instance, but having a good knowledge of the roads is definitely an advantage. Our three drivers definitely know this kind of road with Thierry and Hayden having contested the event in the past and Chris having competed in these types of stages many times. Australia is still part of our development process so a three car finish will be our first target. Naturally, we hope for a good result and to continue demonstrating the good process we’ve made so far in this debut season. Mechanically, Rally Australia shouldn’t be especially tough and we’re carrying some small chassis evolutions on the Hyundai i20 WRC which were designed to improve reliability. We’ve tested in similar conditions without facing any problems so I think we are as prepared as we can be for Australia.”*

Fresh from his maiden WRC win, and having scored a podium at Rally Australia last year, Neuville is looking for another positive result from his outing Down Under.

Neuville said: *“Claiming our first win was of course a moment we will never forget. Continuously, we have to stay with our feet on the ground and be focussed for Australia. We had a very good result there last year and I know the roads quite well now, so we will definitely be looking to have a clean run, to bring the car to the finish and try to set some good times. We didn’t have the chance to test before Australia but we have experienced the i20 WRC in similar conditions so I think we are prepared for the event.”*

Despite not having contested Rally Australia since being based in Coffs Harbour, local hero Atkinson has a good understanding of the roads in his native country.

Atkinson said: *“Your home event is always special and the fact I haven’t done it for a few years makes it even more significant. Since my last rally in Mexico with the team back in March I’ve not done much racing, which is unfortunate because nothing beats time in the car. So I tested for two days in France before going to Australia to get the feeling again and work on set-up with the Hyundai i20 WRC. My target for Australia is to be consistent and be in the fight for a good result. The car is showing some good speed so everything is heading in the right direction. I know we’ll have some really strong support from the Aussie fans too.”*

Paddon claimed the Production Car World Rally Championship in Australia back in 2011 and is aiming for a positive return behind the wheel of the Hyundai i20 WRC.

Paddon commented: *“Rally Australia is the event I have been looking forward to the most and is as close as we get to a home event. Despite the roads being quite different to what we have in New Zealand, we have achieved good success there in the past. It is also extra special for us as we have a lot of support from New Zealand flying over waving the Hyundai and Kiwi flags - so I hope we give them something to cheer for. We had a really good test in France recently and have adapted a new set-up from what we had at the previous events. The team are working hard to keep making strides ahead and coming off the result in Germany, the vibe in the team is very good. We are looking forward to taking another step forward and trying to mix it with the front runners.”*

Based in the Gold Coast in the town of Coffs Harbour – halfway between Sydney and Brisbane – Rally Australia kicks off on Friday 12 September, after a Rally Show held in the city centre on the previous day. Competitors will head south of Coffs on both Friday and Saturday with the highlights being the two runs of the Hyundai Super Special Stage on both evenings and the two passes over the 49km Nambucca stage – one of the longest in the Championship. The itinerary will move north of Coffs Harbour for the final day with six of the 20 stages being run before the Podium Ceremony.

**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 | 42 | 37 |
| WRC podiums | 10 | 10 |
| WRC wins | 1 | 1 |
| Rally Australia starts | 1 | 1 |
| Rally Australia previous results | 2013: 2nd | 2013: 2nd |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hyundai i20 WRC #8**  Chassis number: 001 |  |  |
|  | **Chris Atkinson** | **Stéphane Prévot** |
| DOB | 30 November 1979 | 7 January 1969 |
| First WRC event | 2004, Rally New Zealand | 1989, Rally Great Britain |
| WRC starts | 76 | 159 |
| WRC podiums | 6 | 17 |
| WRC wins | - | - |
| Rally Australia starts | 3 | 5 |
| Rally Australia previous results | 2004: 5th (1st N4 class), 2005: 4th, 2006: 9th | 1995: 6th, 1996: 6th, 1998: 7th, 2003: 10th, 2004: 3rd |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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 | 32 | 40 |
| WRC podiums | - | - |
| WRC wins | - | - |
| Rally Australia starts | 3 | 3 |
| Rally Australia previous results | 2009: 9th (1st N4 class), 2011: 6th (1st PWRC), 2013 (16th, 5th WRC2) | 2009: 9th (1st N4 class),2011: 6th (1st PWRC), 2013 (16th, 5th WRC2) |

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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>

To download high resolution photos for editorial use, full driver’s profiles, audio podcasts as well as other useful press information about the team please refer to:

[www.hyundai-ms.com](mailto:media@hyundai-ms.com)

Username : HyundaiWRC

Password : hmsg2013

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