

Rally Italia Sardegna – Day Three Report

- Hyundai Motorsport has taken its third win of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) season on a thrilling final morning at Rally Italia Sardegna
- Thierry Neuville scored a clean sweep of stage wins to overhaul a 3.9-second deficit to Sébastien Ogier to win the rally by 0.7-seconds, one of the closest finishes in WRC history
- Hayden Paddon finished the rally in fourth overall with Andreas Mikkelsen picking up two drivers' championship points for fourth in the Power Stage

Alghero, Sardinia

June 10, 2018 – Hyundai Motorsport has taken a dramatic victory in Rally Italia Sardegna, the seventh round of the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), as Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul stole a last gasp win with a sublime performance on the final morning.

The Belgian crew started the day with a 3.9-second deficit to leader M-Sport Ford's Sébastien Ogier, but a perfect Sunday morning with four stage wins, including the Power Stage, allowed them to steadily catch and pass the Frenchman.

They took a memorable result by a mere 0.7-seconds after 313.46km of competitive Sardinian stages. In one of the closest finishes in WRC history, it actually matches the same minuscule gap by which Neuville beat Elfyn Evans in the 2017 edition of Rally Argentina.

The result is Hyundai Motorsport's third win of the 2018 season and tenth in its WRC history. It marks the team's second victory in Rally Italia Sardegna following Neuville's triumph in 2016, and the fourth Sardinia event in succession where it has finished on the podium.

Sunday celebrations

Four stages were contested on Sunday morning with two runs through the 14.06km Cala Flumini and 6.96km coastal Sassari-Argentiera tests. There was no respite for any of the crews with tense battles throughout the field. While Neuville and Ogier battled it out at the front, Hayden Paddon was able to defend his fourth place from Mads Østberg with a solid Sunday, securing his best result of the season so far.

One-time rally leader Andreas Mikkelsen wrestled two consolatory driver points for finishing fourth in the nerve-wracking and competitive Power Stage.

With victory today, Hyundai Motorsport has extended its grip on the manufacturers' championship with 212 points, an increased gap of 28 points to M-Sport Ford in second. Neuville's five additional points for Power Stage success saw him take the maximum available for the weekend and increase his lead in the drivers' classification to 27 points over Ogier.

Since its WRC debut in 2014, Hyundai Motorsport has now taken ten victories and a total of 40 individual podiums. As the 2018 season passes its halfway mark, the team now heads into the summer break with an opportunity to reflect on a hugely successful season-to-date.



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

- Third win of 2018 season with six consecutive stage wins from SS15 to the SS20 Power stage
- Increases drivers' championship lead taking maximum 30 points on offer

Neuville said: *"I can't believe it! We knew we had to give it everything we had this morning, and it was a truly fantastic fight with Sébastien. The gap at the end was so small and we left absolutely nothing behind. We kept pushing as hard as we could without doing anything stupid. Battling against Séb is one of the most difficult things to do, so this is a precious victory. Nicolas and I send massive thanks to the whole Hyundai Motorsport team for giving us a great car this weekend. Without them we couldn't have done this today. Starting first on the road on Friday put us at a disadvantage. The rain helped a bit but we never gave up and we can share in one of the finest wins of our career. Leading both championships heading into the break gives us all the motivation we need for the second half of the season."*

Crew Notes: Paddon/Marshall (#6 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

- Fourth place represents crew's best result of 2018 season so far
- Highest finish in Sardinia since second place in 2015

Paddon said: *"A difficult weekend for us, but a positive end to the rally for the team. We wanted more from this rally, but to take fourth place gives us important confidence for the coming events. Things didn't really click from the first stages, and we weren't able to replicate the positive feeling we had from shakedown. Still, it's nice to finish this event for the first time in three years, and to score important points for the team in the manufacturers' championship. We will look to build from here, and to try and take a few more risks. Congratulations to Thierry, Nicolas and the whole team for a fantastic victory."*

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

- Led rally on Friday morning before transmission trouble
- Two consolation points for fourth place in the Power Stage

Mikkelsen said: *"We gave it all we could in the Power Stage to try and salvage something from what has been a frustrating weekend. Since the last rally, we have found a much better feeling from inside the car but we haven't had the results to match. On Friday morning, we could show the potential we have with some strong times and leading the rally. Unfortunately, the transmission problem ended our rally and we've spent the remaining stages just refining things and picking up useful information about the car on these tough gravel stages. It is all valuable learning but we leave Sardinia with a feeling of missed opportunity. We will regroup over the summer break and be ready for Finland. Finally, congratulations to Thierry and Nicolas on an outstanding win this weekend."*

Sardinian success story

- 11 stage wins for Hyundai Motorsport crews in Sardinia
- Third victory of 2018 and tenth in team's WRC history

Team Principal Michel Nandan commented: *"I am completely delighted, as are all members of the team, with this incredible victory. It was truly a perfect win for Thierry and Nicolas. The battle with Ogier started on Saturday and the intensity of that only increased. I was on the edge of my seat all Sunday morning, and the Power Stage was a superb piece of entertainment for all fans. To take our third win of the season*

in such exhilarating style is the ideal way to head into the summer break. We have had a faultless operation all weekend, thanks to the hard work of our team on site and in Alzenau. Hayden and Seb have taken their best result of the season in fourth, while Andreas also picked up some points in the Power Stage. It was a memorable battle with Sébastien and M-Sport Ford which will undoubtedly go down in the WRC history books. We came here hoping to defend our lead of both championships but instead we have extended it – the perfect weekend!"

Next rally

- The FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) heads into its summer break with the next round, Rally Finland, taking place from 26-29 July
- Round 8 of the 2018 season will be the last of four consecutive gravel events before moving back onto tarmac.

Final Overall Classification – Rally Italia Sardegna

1	T. Neuville	N. Gilsoul	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	3:29:18.7
2	S. Ogier	J. Ingrassia	Ford Fiesta WRC	+0.7
3	E. Lappi	J. Ferm	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1:56.3
4	H. Paddon	S. Marshall	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2:55.2
5	M. Østberg	T. Eriksen	Citroën C3 WRC	+3:10.9
6	C. Breen	S. Martin	Citroën C3 WRC	+4:31.7
7	J.M. Latvala	M. Anttila	Toyota Yaris WRC	+11:22.1
8	O. Tänak	M. Järveoja	Toyota Yaris WRC	+12:38.2
9	J. Kopecky	P. Dresler	Škoda Fabia R5	+13:14.6
10	T. Suninen	M. Markkula	Ford Fiesta WRC	+15:30.4

2018 FIA World Rally Championship for Drivers' Standings

After round 7

1	T. Neuville	149
2	S. Ogier	122
3	O. Tanak	79
4	E. Lappi	70
5	D. Sordo	60
6	A. Mikkelsen	56
7	E. Evans	46
8	K. Meeke	43
9	J.M Latvala	37
10	C. Breen	34
11	M. Østberg	26
12	T. Suninen	24
13	H. Paddon	22

2018 FIA World Rally Championship for Manufacturers' Standings

After round 7

1	Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team	212
2	M-Sport Ford World Rally Team	184
3	Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team	161
4	Citroën Total Abu Dhabi World Rally Team	129

All results remain subject to official FIA confirmation.

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:

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Password: Alzenau

For individual information please contact:

Thomas Villette

Phone: +49-151 1135 4339

tvillette@hyundai-ms.com

Nicoletta Russo

Phone: +49-151 1135 4362

nrusso@hyundai-ms.com