

Hyundai Motorsport sets Sweden pace as Neuville dominates Friday

- Thierry Neuville has taken an early lead of Rally Sweden, the second round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) in his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC.
- Neuville and co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul amassed five wins out of a possible seven on Friday's stages, which took place in Sweden and over the border in Norway.
- Hayden Paddon and Dani Sordo hold sixth and seventh respectively with ten more stages to run in this weekend's event.

Torsby, Sweden

February 10, 2017 – Hyundai Motorsport has taken five stage wins on the first complete day of this weekend's Rally Sweden with Thierry Neuville heading the classification by an encouraging 28.1s.

Like at the season-opening round in Monte-Carlo, the Belgian put himself in strong contention at the front of the field from the outset of the rally, building confidence alongside co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul as the day progressed.

In the second round of the 2017 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), Hyundai Motorsport is aiming to fulfil the clear performance promise shown by its Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC so far.

The #4 crew of Hayden Paddon and John Kennard ended the opening day in sixth place, just ahead of Spaniards Dani Sordo and Marc Martí in seventh.

Across the Border

Friday's schedule saw crews tackle snowy stages in Sweden and across the border into Norway. A repeat loop, including the classic Rödjen, the brand new Hof-Finnskog and the 24.88km Svullrya - the longest stage of the day – was supplemented by the 16.43km Torsby stage which was held in the dark.

The rally's Torsby base afforded snowier conditions for the event than twelve months ago. Crews had to adapt to changing grip conditions between the morning and afternoon loop, while also considering the best quantity of Michelin X-Ice North studded tyres for each pass.

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

Neuville and Gilsoul were determined to bounce back from the disappointment of missing out on a fight for victory in Monte-Carlo. They set the standard in five out of Friday's seven stages. After fending off an initial challenge from Jari-Matti Latvala's Toyota, the Belgians extended their lead to 28.1s. However, with a long and precarious rally still to run, the pair is rightly cautious.

Neuville said: *"All in all, it's been a good day's work for us. To lead the rally by such a margin is obviously very encouraging, but we are not getting carried away because we know how unpredictable this rally can be. There's a long way to go! We had a decent first loop today, although it wasn't perfect. In SS4, there were a lot of deep cuts and I hit something very hard with the front. I took it carefully after that in case it was a puncture. Our pace notes were good for the afternoon loop and we looked after the studs so our*



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tyres had performance right to the end. My door kept opening slightly on the final stage, which was a distraction but overall the car has been working very well here and I'm optimistic for the rest of the weekend."

Crew Notes: Paddon/Kennard (#4 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

Paddon and Kennard had a cautious start to the rally, in which they finished second twelve months ago. Lacking confidence in the morning loop, the Kiwi crew sat down with their engineers over lunchtime service to set a better direction for the afternoon stages. Second place in SS5 (Röjden II) and third in SS6 (Hof-Finnskog II) offered cause for encouragement.

Paddon said: *"I'm not going to lie, it's not been the start to the rally that we wanted. Things just weren't coming very naturally on the morning stages, so we had to be patient. It was really a case of battling myself, rather than the stages. I sat with my engineer at lunchtime service and he suggested some changes that really helped us for the afternoon. I had more confidence from the start and felt that I was driving the car, not the car driving me! We lost time as the loop continued because we'd only taken five studded tyres, as opposed to six. But we're in the top-six and I hope to have a more positive Saturday."*

Crew Notes: Sordo/Martí (#6 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC)

The Spanish crew of Sordo and Martí are looking to build on their solid fourth place finish from Monte-Carlo. Despite a small mistake in morning loop, which cost them 20 seconds, they have taken a measured approach in difficult conditions. They find themselves seventh overall at the end of Friday.

Sordo said: *"We had a good morning loop, generally speaking. The car was working well and I was enjoying the stages. The only real issue we had was in SS4 (Svullrya) where I got distracted and missed a hairpin. We lost a lot of time and I couldn't get back into the rhythm. As expected, the conditions were not easy in the afternoon, so we took no risks. It was difficult to keep the car in the lines, so I was lacking a bit of confidence. In the final stage, in the dark conditions, this was especially hard, so we just played it safely. These stages are fast and fun to drive, so I am looking forward to getting back behind the wheel of our i20 Coupe WRC tomorrow."*

High Five for Hyundai Motorsport

Neuville's five stage wins today take Hyundai Motorsport's total stage victories in WRC to 95, with twelve of those scored by the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC in Monte-Carlo and in Sweden. It's been a competitive start to 2017 for the team, but with plenty of challenges yet to come this weekend, the team will stay focused on maintaining its lead.

Team Principal Michel Nandan said: *"We've been quite successful in Sweden in recent years, so after the performance we showed in Monte-Carlo, we had hopes of fighting at the front here. Thierry and Nicolas have once again demonstrated the potential from our Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC with some confident stage wins and being constantly inside the top-two. Things were not as smooth for our other two crews, Hayden/John and Dani/Marc, but there are signs of improvement, which we must put into practice tomorrow. With ten stages still to run, we've got a long way to go and lots more work to do."*

What's in store on Saturday?

A total special stage distance of 125.38km will be run on the penultimate day of Rally Sweden.

A repeat loop of three stages will make up the bulk of Saturday's itinerary, which culminates in a Super Special Stage at the fan-friendly Karlstad Trotting track.

Saturday gets underway with the longest stage of the day – the 31.6km Knon test – before moving onto familiar territory at Hagfors. The 14.27km Vårgasen challenge completes the trio of stages, which includes the famous Colin's Crest jump. The crew who registers the longest jump here will win the coveted Colin's Crest Award.

Hyundai Motorsport has seen its crews take this accolade twice previously – Juho Hänninen in 2014 and Thierry Neuville in 2015.

Overall Classification after Day One

1	T. Neuville	N. Gilsoul	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	1:16:24.7
2	J. M. Latvala	M. Anttila	Toyota Yaris WRC	+28.1
3	O. Tanak	M. Jarveoja	Ford Fiesta WRC	+49.7
4	K. Meeke	P. Nagle	Citroën C3 WRC	+51.8
5	S. Ogier	J. Ingrassia	Ford Fiesta WRC	+55.7
6	H. Paddon	J. Kennard	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1:17.8
7	D. Sordo	M. Martí	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1:40.3
8	C. Breen	P. Nagle	Citroën C3 WRC	+1:54.3
9	E. Evans	D. Barritt	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3:01.5
10	S. Lefebvre	G. Moreau	Citroën C3 WRC	+3:23.6

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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 has developed a brand new car, the Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC, with which it will contest its fourth season.

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 & technical centres worldwide and in 2015 sold 4.96 million vehicles globally. With more than 110,000 employees worldwide, Hyundai Motor continues to enhance its product line-up with localised models and strives to strengthen its leadership in clean technology, starting with the world's first mass-produced hydrogen-powered vehicle, Tucson Fuel Cell and IONIQ, the world's first model with three electrified powertrains.

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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