

NEWS RELEASE

Hyundai Motorsport has opened 2023 FIA World Rally Championship with a podium finish

- Hyundai Motorsport has secured an important podium finish at Rallye Monte-Carlo, getting the 2023 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) off to a positive start
- Thierry Neuville and Martijn Wydaeghe finished the 18-stage rally in third overall, showing solid pace against the competition – including two stage wins
- Dani Sordo/Cándido Carrera and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm made advancements over the weekend with both crews concluding the event more optimistically than they had started.

Monte –Carlo, 2 February 2023 - Hyundai Motorsport has opened its 2023 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) account with a podium finish and a three-car finish in the challenging Rallye Monte-Carlo round.

Thierry Neuville and co-driver Martijn Wydaeghe cemented the top-three position that they had held since Friday, having shown encouraging speed and reliability over the weekend. The pair shuffled the established pack on Saturday, taking two stage wins to stake their podium claim. Third place for the Belgian duo gets Hyundai Motorsport's tenth season in WRC off to a

solid start at an event where the team struggled twelve months ago.

Sunday's itinerary covered a repeated run of Luceram / Lantosque (SS15/SS17, 18.82km) and the iconic La Bollène-Vésubie / Col de Turini (SS16/SS18, 15.12km). Atypically dry tarmac roads were sprinkled with salt, which created slippery conditions in places, so it was far from a straightforward final day. All three Hyundai crews targeted a clean finish, in stark contrast to the last season's Monte, although Sunday's stages weren't without a few nervous moments.

Dani Sordo and Esapekka Lappi continued to seek improved form from their Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid cars on the final four stages. Sordo found a step change in performance alongside co-driver Cándido Carrera, as he shifted into top-five stage pace despite battling an ongoing hybrid issue which limited power up the Col de Turini. The Spaniards ultimately finished seventh overall, one spot ahead of their team-mates Lappi and co-driver Janne Ferm. The Finns, in their first WRC event with the team, made valuable gains during the weekend as they acclimatized to their new car.

Despite the lack of wintry conditions on this year's Rallye Monte-Carlo, the event has proven to be a complex and strategic event, in which tyre choice and management has played a key role. The team has adapted quickly to

the unexpectedly dry tarmac conditions, making set-up adjustments over the 18 stages to enable the crews to perform at their best. While there is undoubtedly still work to be done for future rallies, there are plenty of positives to take from the first round.

“I gave everything I could this weekend and while we would have preferred to be much more in the fight for victory, it is still a good start into a new season, especially compared to last year. The speed was not that great, but it also wasn’t too bad, so there’s no need to be too alarmed. We had more tyre wear than the others and even taking risks we weren’t in a position to match the lead times. We had to be clever, which we were, and we kept the car on the road. In the end, it’s great to be back on the podium in Monte-Carlo. Sweden will be an entirely different type of event and we should be in the game”, said Thierry Neuville.

“Honestly, this weekend has not been to our standards or expectations. We had a lot of problems with the hybrid yesterday, and again on today’s final stages. I know the team has done all it can to give me a car to perform better. It’s disappointing to have the problems, but we have tackled things well as a team and can look forward with some encouragement. I have enjoyed myself a bit more today and the times have also been better considering the issues – that’s a positive, at least”, said Dani Sordo

Added Esapekka Lappi: "We have gathered important mileage this weekend and made some steps forward. On tarmac, you need to be smart if you want to make the times faster. You must get the indication from the car that you can drive it faster. I think we did just that this weekend. We saw we were not on the pace, so we slowly developed ourselves and made some progress. We are now much better prepared for Croatia, the next tarmac event. There are just small details we need to work on to be as fast as we want to be. This is the trickiest thing because the level is so high, you need perfection to match the top times".

"Third place is not a bad start, but we should not lose sight of the fact we have a bigger vision, fighting for wins and championship titles, so we must not get complacent. There has been lots to digest for myself and for the team; we have had strong drivers, encouraging moments, long days, and lots of work. A podium is nice but we're still 45 seconds from the win. Ogier has been the benchmark all weekend and that should act as inspiration for us all to get stronger. We need to understand what we're missing and come back with a response. Ultimately, we need more pace. We have tried to be more aggressive with the car set-up and in hindsight we should have done this earlier in the weekend, which might have given a better dynamic and more confidence to the crews. Thierry had a strong weekend, being decisive

and smart with the team, his set-up, and the tyres. For Dani and Esapekka, it was a valuable learning weekend in tricky conditions. I have been pleased to see progress each day from both. Unfortunately, we had a recurrence of the hybrid issues on Dani's car, so we need to understand from a team perspective what happened to avoid it happening again", stated Cyril Abiteboul, Hyundai Motorsport Team Principal.

– End –

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Established in 1967, Hyundai Motor Company is present in over 200 countries with more than 120,000 employees dedicated to tackling real-world mobility challenges around the globe.

Based on the brand vision 'Progress for Humanity,' Hyundai Motor is accelerating its transformation into a Smart Mobility Solution Provider.

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