



Hyundai accelerates WRC preparations with Team Principal appointment

- WRC veteran Michel Nandan appointed Team Principal
- Establishment of Hyundai Motorsport GmbH
- Hyundai WRC i20 to be developed at new base at Alzenau, Germany
- Investment in global motorsport programme underpins Hyundai's continued growth

Hyundai has bolstered its nascent World Rally Championship programme with the appointment of WRC veteran Michel Nandan as Team Principal. The Frenchman, who has held key technical positions on the world rally stage since the mid-1990s, joins Hyundai at an exciting time in the manufacturer's WRC programme.

Hyundai announced its intentions to enter the World Rally Championship at the Paris Motor Show in September last year and is now developing a WRC-specification of its new i20 model with the objective of competing in the entire 2014 championship. Hyundai has also established a bespoke motorsport subsidiary, Hyundai Motorsport GmbH, under which the company's WRC programme will be run. Mr. Gyoo-Heon Choi will take on the role of President of Hyundai Motorsport GmbH.

Hyundai has identified WRC as the perfect platform from which to promote the excitement and dynamism of its growing brand on an international stage. The thrill and spectacle of world rally coupled with the technological prowess of the series make for a perfect match to the Hyundai brand values.

In fact, Hyundai is no stranger to the world of WRC, having participated in the competitive motorsport series from 2000-2003, but this new challenge will see Hyundai Motorsport GmbH run a new in-house team operating out of bespoke headquarters in Alzenau, Germany, just outside of Frankfurt where Hyundai's European HQ is situated.

As the 2013 WRC season gets underway with the legendary Monte-Carlo rally, Hyundai is embarking on a year of preparation for its return to the world rally stage with an intensive development of its WRC-spec i20 under Team Principal Michel Nandan's experienced direction.

Nandan said: "I am honoured to have been chosen by Hyundai to spearhead its exciting new entry into the WRC. The project is still in its infancy but things are moving rapidly and I am looking forward to developing the team as this year progresses. There is much to be done, of that we are fully aware, but with a dedicated facility in Alzenau and an ambitious core of highly motivated personnel, we are already making good progress."

An interim version of the i20 has already begun testing in Korea to enable Hyundai to undertake component and suspension analysis with further tests scheduled throughout 2013.

Nandan added: “We are deliberately using an interim version of the i20 to carry out important component testing and to ensure that we have done our homework before we enter competition. This phase will continue during 2013 as we prepare for our first full season back in WRC in 2014. There are a lot of other decisions that we will have to make during the course of the year, particularly with drivers, but this also requires time and due diligence. We will, at the same time, be keeping a close eye on how the 2013 WRC season unfolds.”

Hyundai’s commitment to and investment in a global motorsport programme underlines the manufacturer’s continued growth and resilience, as it aims to strengthen its global market position. The opportunities for technology transfer from WRC to road-going vehicles in the future make the step back into motorsport a shrewd and logical choice for Hyundai.

Hyundai’s rally history

The company’s involvement in the sport began in 1998, when it competed in the F2 class of the WRC for two seasons. In 1999, the team announced it would step up to the top class in 2000, rallying a fully-developed WRC car based on the three-door Accent, which competed until 2003.

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About Hyundai Motor Company

Established in 1967, Hyundai Motor Co. has grown into the Hyundai Motor Group, with more than two dozen auto-related subsidiaries and affiliates. Hyundai Motor -- which has seven manufacturing bases outside of South Korea including Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, India, Russia, Turkey and the U.S. -- sold 4.4 million vehicles globally in 2012. Hyundai Motor, which employs over 80,000 worldwide, offers a full line-up of products including small to large passenger vehicles, SUVs and commercial vehicles. Further information about Hyundai Motor and its products is available at www.hyundai.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 recently announced World Rally Championship programme. Based in Alzenau on the outskirts of Frankfurt in Germany, the company is in the process of establishing Hyundai’s return to WRC with a bespoke team of skilled staff developing a WRC-specification i20. Further information about Hyundai Motorsport GmbH is available at www.hyundai-motorsport.com

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