

Rally México – Day Three Report

- Hyundai Motorsport has celebrated a second-place finish in Rally México, round three of the 2023 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), after an inspiring weekend for the team
- Thierry Neuville hunted second place right down to the Power Stage to claim his third consecutive podium finish of the season – and scoring six stage wins in the process
- Dani Sordo finished the event in fifth place after Esapekka Lappi crashed out on Saturday morning, while impressively leading the rally.

León, Mexico

March 19, 2023 – Hyundai Motorsport has claimed a stunning second place finish in Rally México, the third round of the 2023 FIA World Rally Championship (WRC), on a gripping final day in which Thierry Neuville claimed his third consecutive podium result of the season in style.

The Belgian had been involved in a thrilling battle for second place with Elfyn Evans since Saturday; the enthralling contest continued into Sunday with the two drivers nip-and-tuck on each of the final four stages.

Neuville and co-driver Martijn Wydaeghe held their nerve in the Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid to take two more stage wins and push right up to the closing metres of the Power Stage. A dogged approach paid dividends as they snatched second place by a mere 0.4 seconds. Their Hyundai Motorsport teammates Dani Sordo and Cándido Carrera, whose rally was hampered by a puncture on Friday afternoon, finished the event in a valuable points-scoring fifth place.

Sunday's itinerary began on familiar ground with the fourth running of the short Las Dunas Superspecial (SS20, 3.53km). Neuville claimed his fifth stage win of the weekend – and the team's 11th – to reduce the gap to Evans to just 4.1 seconds. All eyes were on the two contenders during the longest test of the rally, Otates (SS21, 35.63km), as they fought to take the upper hand.

Mighty performances from both crews made for edge-of-the-seat viewing as they remained neck-and-neck for much of the stage. Just half-a-second separated their respective times after the 30km split but Evans extended his slight advantage at the flying finish to take a 5.8-second lead into the final stages: San Diego (SS22, 12.62km) and the El Brinco Power Stage (SS23, 9.59km).

The pendulum swung back into the Belgians' favour on San Diego with another stage win that reduced the gap once again to 2.7 seconds, with fewer than ten kilometres remaining. A typically determined performance from Neuville in the Power Stage saw him grasp every available opportunity, and ultimately, he did enough to steal second in the closing moments of the rally.

For Hyundai Motorsport, Rally México has been an encouraging event with Esapekka Lappi starting out of the blocks in impressive fashion on Friday. The Finn grabbed the headlines as he led the rally before crashing out on Saturday morning's opening stage. From there, Neuville picked up the mantle seamlessly to continue the team's stage-winning results. All three Hyundai Motorsport crews took a fastest time in Mexico, a total of 12 from a possible 22 (Saturday's stage 15 was cancelled) and showed victory potential from the Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid on rough, tough, gravel roads.

In the championship, only four points separates the top three drivers with Neuville moving up to second on 53 points, three from the lead. Meanwhile, Hyundai Motorsport has reached the 100-point mark in the manufacturers' title, holding second place after three rounds.



Crew Notes: Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe (#11 Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid)

- Second place for the Belgians after an impressive weekend
- Six stage wins enabled the crew to hunt down their third podium of the season

Neuville said: *"I have been flat out all weekend, and I am delighted to take our third podium in three rallies. We had tried hard to improve the car all weekend; the handling has been getting better. With our road position on the first day, it was tough; we ended Friday almost 40 seconds adrift of the lead. Since Saturday, things have been better and slowly we could catch up with Elfyn. He didn't make it easy, so we had to fight hard right to the end. After today's long stage, Otates, I was a bit disappointed, as I had to slow down for a couple of dogs on the road. That cost us time, but I stayed calm and saw an opportunity in the Power Stage. I pushed as hard as I could, without taking unnecessary risks. Second place is a great reward for the whole team."*

Crew Notes: Dani Sordo/Cándido Carrera (#6 Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid)

- Spaniards had been in podium contention until a puncture on Friday
- Consistent pace secured them a valuable fifth place and a Power Stage point

Sordo said: *"I have mixed feelings because on the one hand I am pleased that we could score some good points for the championship, but there is also a little bit of frustration. The puncture we had on Friday prevented us from being more involved in the fight. We had higher expectations coming into this event. The competition is fierce and there are a lot of strong drivers at the front. We did well to bring the car home in the points and I am sure we can do an equally good job at our next rally. It has been great to be back in Mexico on amazing roads, in front of all these incredible spectators who give so much love and support to WRC. I've enjoyed it and I think we've shown our potential."*

Hyundai Motorsport Team Principal Cyril Abiteboul said: *"Taking second position is a great feeling and fantastic reward for the whole team, who have all done an amazing job in preparing a competitive and perfectly reliable car for the challenge of Rally México. Losing Esapekka from the rally on Saturday morning was tough after he showed such impressive pace, but we remained focused on the job in hand. Thierry had been suffering a bit from an adverse road position, as well as with a hybrid issue following an artificial jump in the Ortega stage that cost him time. Still, he showed his resilience and did brilliantly. He was passionate and determined, attacking when it mattered to get the job done. As a result, he has moved up a place in the drivers' championship, which we know will be incredibly tight this season. All in all, I feel we have a car, crews and a team capable of being competitive in all situations. I am interested to see how we fare in Croatia – that will be the next litmus test back on tarmac."*

Next rally

- The FIA World Rally Championship switches back to tarmac next month for Croatia Rally, taking place from April 20-23 and based at the Zagreb Service Park.

Final Overall Classification – Rally México

1	S. Ogier	V. Landais	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1 Hybrid	3:16:09.4
2	T. Neuville	M. Wydaeghe	Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid	+27.5
3	E. Evans	S. Martin	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1 Hybrid	+27.9
4	K. Rovannerä	J. Halttunen	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1:55.3
5	D. Sordo	C. Carrera	Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid	+2:58.8
6	G. Greensmith	J. Andersson	Škoda Fabia RS	+12:31.5
7	E. Lindholm	R. Hämäläinen	Škoda Fabia Evo	+13:04.4
8	O. Solberg	E. Edmondson	Škoda Fabia RS	+13:37.7
9	O. Tänak	M. Järveoja	Ford Puma Rally1 Hybrid	+15:19.6
10	K. Kajetanowicz	M. Szczepaniak	Škoda Fabia Evo	+15:56.6

2023 FIA World Rally Championship for Manufacturers' Standings

After round 3

1	Toyota Gazoo Racing World Rally Team	127
2	Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team	100
3	M-Sport Ford World Rally Team	73

2023 FIA World Rally Championship for Drivers' Standings

After round 3

1	S. Ogier	56
2	T. Neuville	53
3	K. Rovannerä	52
4	O. Tänak	47
5	E. Evans	44
6	C. Breen	19
7	D. Sordo	17
8	E. Lappi	15
9	G. Greensmith	8
10	T. Katsuta	8

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, including the FIA World Rally Championship, FIA ETCR – eTouring Car World Cup, and Customer Racing projects. Hyundai Motorsport quickly established a strong reputation in WRC, finishing as runners-up in the manufacturers' championship on three consecutive occasions between 2016 and 2018 before claiming the title in 2019 and 2020. The company then embraced the all-new technical challenge of WRC's hybrid era in 2022, resulting in the birth of the Hyundai i20 N Rally1 Hybrid. Since the establishment of its Customer Racing activities in September 2015, Hyundai Motorsport has become a trusted partner for teams and drivers looking for success on the rally stages or on racetracks around the world. From its competitive i20 N Rally2 to the front-running Elantra N TCR, Hyundai Motorsport-built cars have claimed victory in several championships, including national rally series in France and Spain, as well as titles in the FIA World Touring Car Cup (WTCR) in 2018, 2019 and 2022. Designed and built at its Alzenau headquarters, the Veloster N ETCR heralded an exciting new era in 2019, in which electric racing became one of the company's pillars. Embarking on its tenth year in 2023, Hyundai Motorsport continues to unify WRC, Customer Racing, and electric racing, which play instrumental roles in driving Hyundai's global high-performance N brand and are supporting an important perception shift for the Hyundai brand around the world.

Further information about Hyundai Motorsport is available at: <http://motorsport.hyundai.com>

About Hyundai Motor Company

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. The company invests in advanced technologies such as robotics and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) to bring about revolutionary mobility solutions, while pursuing open innovation to introduce future mobility services. In pursuit of sustainable future for the world, Hyundai will continue its efforts to introduce zero emission vehicles equipped with industry-leading hydrogen fuel cell and EV technologies.

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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