



A FAN'S GUIDE TO THE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO RALLYING

Just as in circuit racing, Shell has been a major supporter of rallying from the sport's earliest days. In 1907, the greatest rally of all was staged from Peking to Paris, won by Prince Borghese at the wheel of an Itala powered by Shell fuels and oils. Rallying soon became a hugely popular sport, where drivers would race against the clock in Special Stages. The sport became increasingly commercialised in the 1950s as manufacturers, fuel and lubricants companies, suspension and tyre suppliers alike all saw the value of rallying as a genuine showcase for the quality of their products. In 1973, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) organised the first World Rally Championship (WRC) for manufacturer teams, adding a drivers' championship in 1979.

A radical overhaul of the sporting regulations in the mid-1990s meant that rallies would be based in one host city with centralised servicing, media facilities and fan areas. They would drive a route that included between three and six Special Stages in the morning, return at lunch and then complete the route again in the afternoon. Today, the WRC is widely regarded as one of the most challenging motorsport series in the world, with stages taking place on gravel, asphalt, dirt, ice and snow, where temperatures can range from -30°C to +40°C. The 2017 season brings rule changes aimed at increasing power, speed, style and safety, with new turbochargers that have boosted power, wider cars that corner better, and seats further inside the car, protecting driver and co-driver better in the event of a crash.

THE HYUNDAI SHELL MOBIS WORLD RALLY TEAM

In 2013, Hyundai Motorsport announced that it would be returning to the WRC for the 2014 season after a nine-year sabbatical, with an all-new car based on its successful i20 hatchback. After establishing a new base in Alzenau, Germany, the final car was revealed in the colours of Hyundai and Shell in December 2013, extending a partnership that had been benefitting customers globally since 2005.

The team enjoyed a successful first year, with Belgian aces Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul taking a sensational maiden victory at Rallye Deutschland. Consistent pace continued through the 2016 season, bringing with it two more wins for the team and a host of strong podium finishes. For 2017 Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul remain in the seats that they have held since 2014, as do the Spanish pairing of Dani Sordo and Marc Martí. The third pairing features New Zealand youngster Hayden Paddon and his experienced co-driver John Kennard, who won their first event in Argentina last year. Although, John is due to step down from his co-driver role following the conclusion of the Rally Finland in August and will be replaced by Britain's Sebastian Marshall for the remaining four races of 2017.

With Shell on board as a co-title sponsor and Official Lubricant Technical Partner, all the Hyundai Shell Mobis World Rally Team's 2017 Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC cars will run exclusively on Shell Helix Ultra, formulated with Shell PurePlus Technology which minimises friction and combat wear, helping ensure exceptional performance in extreme temperatures and protecting the engines through the diverse and demanding driving conditions of rallying. This technical partnership sees Shell Helix Ultra scientists working closely with the technicians at Hyundai Motorsport on their oil requirements for use in competition, testing and development, building on a successful global programme between Shell and Hyundai Motor Company that dates back to 2005, where Shell is the official aftermarket motor oil supplier recommended by Hyundai vehicles worldwide.



So what is rallying? Rallies are events where cars compete against the clock rather than wheel-to-wheel on the racetrack. Each event takes place on public roads, with clear checkpoints to ensure that progress can be measured and to maintain a minute-by-minute schedule for the event. The route includes sections taking place on closed roads that are known as Special Stages where drivers line up at the start one at a time and are counted down to try and set the fastest time through that stage before re-joining normal traffic and continuing the route.

How does that all work? Everything is driven by a schedule. Each car has its own schedule that it must keep to for the day's checkpoints. If a car checks in a minute late to a checkpoint they receive a 10 second penalty that is added to their total time for the event. Checking-in early to a time control carries a stiffer penalty of one minute for every minute that they are early.

So the drivers have to drive the route, race against the clock in the Special Stages, and keep to a schedule by the minute? That is the job of the co-drivers. They look after the maps and the timekeeping equipment, and are responsible for creating and calling out the pace notes during each Special Stage. Pace notes are created when the driver and co-driver are allowed to drive the stages ahead of the rally as a recce to capture as much useful detail as they can. They are then read out by the co-driver as they go through the stage competitively to instruct the driver on how quickly to go and what the risks are.

What do I need to do or bring to get the most out of a rally? The most important things are a pair of comfortable shoes, sun block and warm or waterproof clothing as required. Make sure that you stay within designated viewing areas and pay attention to the instructions of marshals on the stage.

Where are the best photo moments on a rally? For fans, a rally is one non-stop photo-fest. Because the Service Parks are relatively open, you can get to meet the drivers and team members much more easily than at many events. Also, the spectacular scenery and the camaraderie among the fans out on the stages is such that you'll have plenty of things that you will want to capture. If you are a guest of the Hyundai Shell-Mobis World Rally Team hospitality programme, you get to sit in a gallery above the working area and see the mechanics doing their job, adjusting the settings and making sure that the Shell Helix Ultra with PurePlus Technology is doing its job to protect the engine.



RALLY PHRASEBOOK

CEREMONIAL START - Rallies are hosted in cities or other centres of interest and beauty, from the seafront at Monaco to the lakes and forests of Finland. The ceremonial start is usually held on a Thursday evening, when crews drive onto the start/finish ramp, greet the fans and give a short interview before making way for the next car.

FLYING FINISH - The end of a Special Stage where the timing stops, after which the car must be slowed.

PACE NOTES - A description of the road ahead, called out by the co-driver to prepare the driver for what to expect. During a track recce, drivers describe the road to their co-drivers who write down the information in a form of shorthand. During the rally the co-driver reads the notes back to the driver.

SERVICE REPAIRS - The mechanics can rebuild a rally car in extraordinarily short periods of time. Changing tyres takes just a minute on average, while replacing brake pads, discs or suspension takes around three minutes. The entire gearbox can be switched out in just 12 minutes.

TIME CARD - Carried by the co-driver, the time card is a record of stage times and time control arrival times throughout the rally. The card is stamped by officials as the rally progresses.

ZERO CAR - A course car driven through a stage before the competitors start to alert spectators that the section is live, preceded by the triple zero and double zero cars. Often, celebrity drivers or special cars are employed in the 'Zero' roles.

