**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 20 April 2024
Day: 3
FlashN°: 12
Special stage: SS13 Smerovišće – Grdanjci 1
Distance: 15.72 km
Weather: Overcast with light rain
Road conditions: Dry with light sheen in patches
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**Car #13. GRÉGOIRE MUNSTER/LOUIS LOUKA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

M-Sport’s youngster passes through 10s slower than the morning run with three hard and one soft tyre fitted. “Basically we expected rain in the morning and there was none so I thought ‘let’s go a bit more aggressive in the afternoon’ and now I/m the most aggressive driver out of the field and its’ started to rain on the startline! So maybe there will be some more rain for the others, I don’t know, but it was still okay with the hard, just tricky in places, just hesitating.”

**Car #9. ANDREAS MIKKELSEN/TORSTEIN ERIKSEN (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

All of the Hyundai drivers have opted for two hard tyres at the front two softs on rear, resulting in a 10m40.6s for Mikkelsen. “I thought I had a puncture in the beginning because the car was acting weird and was moving a bit about. But I didn’t get any alarm and it didn’t get any worse and then I decided to keep on going but not very happy with the stage. When the rain started coming a little bit with my hard tyres I was way too hesitant.”

**Car #18. TAKAMOTO KATSUTA/AARON JOHNSTON (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

A trouble-fee run for the Japanese driver but confidence is an issue. “At least better than hard but still really tricky. You don’t know that a few corners are quite okay, because it’s under the tree, you have grip, the next corner open air and straight away no grip so you have to see the trees and the views and if there is trees or something so not easy but otherwise okay.”

**Car #16. ADRIEN FOURMAUX/ALEXANDRE CORIA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

The Frenchman is furious with his choice of two hard and two soft tyres fitted and two wets in the boot. “I’m not happy, I don’t understand how we can be so bad to find the tyre choice before the stages. We have a lot of data and we cannot make the good tyre choice so it’s really, really disappointing. Anyway, we have to deal with what we’ve got now.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

Tänak is less frustrated than the Ford drivers after his run. “In some moments it started to really rain and only the last two corners were dry again so for some moments I had hards at the front and I just lost them so, yeah, this was not the good call there.”

**Car #17. SÉBASTIEN OGIER/VINCENT LANDAIS (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

The French veteran has an optimum soft rubber setup and duly strides to the top of the timesheets for this stage. “So far so good, but it’s a four stages loop so… a bit of rain in the middle, light one, that started to affect the road so… so far it’s okay.”

**Car #33. ELFYN EVANS/SCOTT MARTIN (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

The Welshman goes a second faster than Ogier to claim the stage win and the rally lead as Neuville struggles in his wake. “I don’t know it’s very difficult to predict at the end of the day so it’s not an easy choice and obviously we don’t know how it plays out for the rest of the loop yet.”

**Car #11. THIERRY NEUVILLE/MARTIJN WYDAEGHE (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

The Belgian’s run ends up 6.7s off Evans with Ogier closing on him for second place. “Obviously not a good tyres. I push very hard and just try to carry on. I knew I was losing time but we’re here and I think we limit quite well the time loss so we have done what we could. It will be difficult (to recover the time).”

**Car #34. NIKOLAY GRYAZIN/KONSTANTIN ALEKSANDROV (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

The WRC2 leader endures a horrible stage. “I was saying because from the videos from the Live TV it was dry and we tried to go with the slicks and with the hards also but in the middle it was full wet unfortunately. I was hoping in the dry his choice will pay off but unfortunately there was the wet and we just lose a lot I think in the middle part because I just understeer a lot and the car was really just caution and waiting for the grip. It really is dirty stage but at least we pass no big issues.”

**Car #20. YOHAN ROSSEL/ARNAUD DUNAND (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

After the drama of the final stage of the morning loop, the WRC2 points leader gets backon terms with his team-mate at the head of the class by taking 20.8 seconds from him in the stage. “It’s not bad. My feeling is not bad, with same tyres on the car it’s a different car. I don’t know why and my feeling is good.”