**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 20 April 2024
Day: 3
Flash N°: 15
Special stage: SS16 Pećurkovo Brdo – Mreżnićki Novaki 2
Distance: 9.11 km
Weather: Overcast
Road conditions: Dry
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**Car #13. GRÉGOIRE MUNSTER/LOUIS LOUKA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

A fairly leisurely run through for Munster, who finishes the day in reflective form. “Basically we were expecting rain all day and it never really came. In the morning we were too soft and here we were a bit too hard, certainly for these two last ones, the Tarmac is just too shiny that the hards doesn’t bite but good learning. I mean for sure it’s good to be first on the road it’s always a bit easier in the morning but like I said yesterday a lot of mud from the cuts and today there is not so much to pull out for the others behind so basically the advantage is not that big but still better to be in front.”

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

Tyre wear adds to the difficulty on this stage for the Norwegian. “On this stage the rear (tyres) were delaminating so I had to take care. From the beginning I have big vibration, I saw it was very on the limit so I just have to go very steady through there. It was the hard tyre, so I don’t know why it did that.”

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

A much happier Katsuta closes out the day with provisional fastest time and is in a positive state of mind for the final loop of stages on Sunday. “For sure much better than yesterday so little bit happier than yesterday but still this is not what I wanted to perform like this. I will do tomorrow for sure. Still one day to go so I try to improve myself and this is maybe tomorrow target for me.”

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

Dropping more time to Tänak means that finishing higher than fifth will be out of the Frenchman’s hands but he remains upbeat. “Well you know we’ve been fighting with Ott for the last two days so it’s been really positive to fight with a World champion what I wanted to beat but we are a little bit behind so maybe next time – at least for today. To be fair I think it’s been really interesting for the experience in these conditions so it’s positive.”

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

Provisionally the fastest time from Tänak after a busy day for the Estonian. “It was actually quite higher grip than previous time so obviously probably tyres are in good condition so to be honest in there it was quite straightforward… I was expecting it to be more complicated.”

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

Passing through the stage in a much happier situation that in the morning loop, Ogier sets the new benchmark to go to the top of the stage times. “Well like all day we tried pushing as much as we could. It wasn’t enough but I think still it’s been a good day for me in the car. I will keep pushing like I did since the start of the rally. I think today we did a good day but the gap is unfortunately from yesterday and that was kind of expected before coming here but it’s not over so let’s give everything tomorrow.”

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

Another very solid effort from Evans, pushing as hard as he dare to try and wrest the overnight lead back from Neuville but falls short of Ogier’s target time. “It’s been good fun. What can I say I mean it’s been a good day, some good driving but I couldn’t quite follow Thierry I mean the margins are tight here, yeah, it didn’t quite work out. Just keep driving, hopefully make some good decisions with the tyres and try our best.“

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

After dropping a little time at the start of the stage before the hard compound tyres warmed up, Neuville threw everything at delivering his second stage win on this 9.11 km test. Doing so with a whoop in the cockpit by a margin of half a second, this means that co-driver Martijn Wydaeghe must fulfil his pledge to buy a Porsche 911 in celebration of their double success. “It’s not a big lead but it’s been a great day despite a not perfect tyre choice this afternoon we were capable of defending our position and two times fastest here on this stage so he needs to open the wallet now! He’s paid enough… I’m sure somebody at home is not very happy right now. Tomorrow we continue attacking we have a good feeling and make the right tyre choice. This wasn’t great this afternoon so it wasn’t easy, the weather was very difficult to judge and we did what we could with what we had this afternoon and we were capable of keeping our lead so we are happy with that.”