**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 21 April 2024
Day: 4
Flash N°: 17
Special stage: SS18 Zagorska Sela – Kumrovec 1
Distance: 14.24 km
Weather: Bright and cold
Road conditions: Dry
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Car #13. GRÉGOIRE MUNSTER/LOUIS LOUKA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

8m 20.4s “It’s a stage for adrenaline junkies! It’s just crazy – it was a really difficult one in Rally2 but in Rally1 it’s just every corner is just jumping I have the feeling Louis is almost too late but I’s just because we are arriving so fast and there is so much information with the corners he is like not breathing from start to finish so he cannot go faster! I hope we do a good result for (team principal Richard Millener’s 40th) birthday and just hope he is happy in Croatia so we can party a bit tonight.”

**ANDREAS MIKKELSEN/TORSTEIN ERIKSEN (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

A stirling performance from the Norwegian as he battled some significant oversteer to end te stage faster than Munster by 3.5s “It’s a very particular stage that, for sure not an easy one. Really it’s learning to trust the rear properly I feel it steppin out a lot and I have a lot of moments all the time. So I nbeed more stability from the rear I feel to really commit to go on the throttle because the rear is always stepping out. We had a clean stage – not a clean, we had many moments – but we got through.”

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

8.13.0 “We tried a few things and it doesn’t work so well it’s not so good, didn’t feel so good in the car but we will fix for the second passage fine.”

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

Disaster for the Frenchman as he clips an anti-cut device on a right-hand bend and goes off with steering failure, triggering a race to repair the car in order to rescue points from the Super Sunday and Powerstage bonuses. After 20 minutes a repair is effected by the crew and they are able to continue. “I just half-touched a concrete bollard it snapped the steering arm so yeah. Sometimes it bends, sometimes it breaks, this time it breaks. Sometimes you get only a puncture, it’s like that. Anyway, we are there, I’m happy we have secured some points yesterday so now we need to get ahead to push for the Powerstage.”

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

Goes fastest 1.1s ahead of Katsuta despite a wild moment early in the stage. “It was a bit more than a moment: it was far, far off and a proper off but luckily all okay. Once again I had a big opening in the braking and I was just a passenger so that was quite offensive. Quite early in the stage maybe 3 – 4 km.”

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

“Very tricky stage so we try to stay decent, don’t make a mistake, I’ve seen some crazy lines I think Adrien crashed. We for sure don’t make a difference in there but it’s very easy to make a mistake.”

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

The Welshman goes off the road and spins after the second split and loses time, recovering the road with damage to the rear of the car. He ends 19.6s off Tänak’s time. “Just slippy place, the hard (tyre) rear on the left and it just took off. Yeah it was close, maybe just hit the bank but it spun the car unfortunately.“

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

The rally leader also goes off after losing the rear of the car and almost rolling as the car disappears into the foliage. Significant bodywork and aerodynamic damage is suffered as a result and losing 23.3s to turn the top three order on its head. “Obviously it was a lot of corners and I don’t know – when I got the pacenote it was far too late. We lost 20 seconds to Ogier so it’s a shame because everything was going well. The car is okay.”

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

The rally leader opts to make a conservative run through the stage and is grateful for his cushion to team-mate Rossel. “Difficult, The first kilometre, which is new, ooh-la-la-ooh-la-la-oop! So okay I go slowly, we go slowly in the forest oop! It’s much more dirty than last year. I try to be like calm to not risk, I think like okay this stage I lose no problem but it’s so easy to make a mistake.”

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

Points are the priority for the WRC2 championship leader who ends 0.2s slower than Gryazin. “It’s very, very difficult, lot of muddy section, the cut is humid and it’s not easy with the grip. I don’t know.”