**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 21 April 2024
Day: 4
Flash N°: 18
Special stage: SS19 Trakošćan – Vrbno 2
Distance: 13.15 km
Weather: Bright and cold
Road conditions: Dry
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

The self-confessed gravel spreader at the front of the field is amazed by the stage conditions on the second pass. “A lot of gravel pulled out even like cuts that didn’t exist because the pole is gone so you just have to put half the car in the cut so very dirty the last section. You can always enjoy in these cars.”

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

Fourth fastest time at the finish of the previous stage is the best that the Norwegian has mustered all weekend. He follows up with fifth fastest on the penultimate stage. “I adjusted my notes a little bit so it was better but struggling when it’s a lot of gravel on the road to commit and to trust the car when it’s really slippery and when it’s just one line because the rear steps out and I lose all grip and it’s not where I want to be.”

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

Another provisional fastest time for the Japanese driver in his bid to secure maximum Super Sunday points, and as conditions deteriorate in his wake the stage win is his. “For sure I’m pushing like hell! We need to get the (Super Sunday) points for the team and I did a quite shit job on the last two days and so now I need to work a lot.”

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

A gentle run through for the Frenchman as he aims to rescue what he can from the Powerstage. “Well I’m just trying to save my tyres for the Powerstage so I was just slow in that one but we’re going to have a push in the next one if we can so all is okay. We have fixed everything, the car is perfect.”

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

The Estonian can’t keep pace with Katsuta as the cars have tracked a huge amount of dirt out of the cuts onto the racing line. “Clean stage so no mistake. It’s dirty.”

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

An unhappy rally leader comes out of the stage after having survived another near-miss. “Now we did again a mistake in this stage so it was another difficult one for us. Near the start two corners we completely understeer and went a bit in the bank in one and, yeah…”

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

Evans takes more than 2s out of Ogier’s lead but is under no illusions. “I’m not super happy with my stage but it was so dirty in here, very difficult to judge, but all okay. We’ve got to try and see what’s possible. Let’s see. I’m not sure if I can afford Seb’s ‘a lot of money’ (to pull over and let him win).”

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

A subdued atmosphere in the Hyundai as the former rally leaders roll out of the stage faster only than Fourmaux. “There’s nothing we can do now. No rear wing: the car is undriveable. And no hybrid so we have to get back the points. It’s frustrating to be honest but drivers make mistakes and co-drivers do make mistakes as well but for sure it’s hurting.”

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

Citroën prepares to make it four wins from four starts in WC2 from Croatia Rally. Gryazin takes no risks in aiming to be the driver to complete the set of silverware. “Now we are in safe mode, I’m not pushing – just one more stage we just ty to enjoy and not do stupid things.”

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

The Frenchman, who has won WRC2 in Croatia Rally for the past two years, it is time to concede that he is unlikely to make it three wins in a row. “The plan is to stay like that, take the points, let’s see on the next one. We see this morning it’s a crazy stage but the gap it’s too much. The king is dead!”