**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 21 April 2024
Day: 4
Flash N°: 19
Special stage: SS20 Zagorska Sela – Kumrovec 2
Distance: 14.24 km
Weather: Overcast and cold
Road conditions: Dry
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**Car #22. SAMI PAJARI/ENNI MÄLKÖNEN**

Third place on the event is by no means assured for the Finn after a thunderous Powerstage performance from fourth-placed Gus Greensmith. Holding his nerve, and hitting the scenery in several places, Pajari survives to claim the final WRC2 podium spot on Croatia Rally by 0.3s. “That was the plan, obviously I was pushing like crazy in the beginning and we hit maybe one or two or I don’t know how many stones or whatsoever but we made I through and I gave it everything. It was quite demanding with vibration inside the close to the end so maybe something is not so perfect anymore but we made it so it’s good!”

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

A solid drive to second place after multiple upsets means that while Rossel must concede his potential third consecutive Croatia Rally win in WRC2, his championship ambitions remain firmly on track. “It’s good for the team, for the constructor, I think it’s the perfect weekend. For me I am happy, it’s not bad for sure but the feeling is strange all the weekend. Lot of mistake of strategy, of tyre choice, of driving, of co-driver – it’s like that but we finish, we are a team, we are together. Let’s see.”

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

As gently as he dare go through the stage, Gryazin secures Citroën’s fourth consecutive WRC2 win on Croatia Rally. “It feels really nice, especially with all the work which we done before, during the event and all the nervous which we had during the event. Thank you for the team it’s a big effort for them, they never slow me down, they just keep me up and keep me pushing – especially for the co-driver because this kind of stages to read this fast you need to have the skills. And all to my family, to the gravel crew, we were really on the top. We need to just remember this feeling because it’s not common I have this pace all the time and we just need to get this as usual so it will be much more easier to work with the pace. Overall happy so now just relax a little bit!”

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

A big push to salvage as many Powerstage bonus points as possible after crashing out of fifth place overall on this stage in the morning loop. Fourmaux delivers a mighty pass on the optimum road conditions to secure the Powerstage victory. “To be fair we have been pushing quite hard I hope it’s going to be enough but I can still improve in some places so I think it’s going to be faster behind but it’s so demanding and so special and it’s really a shame we have done one small mistake this rally and it’s the corner off so it’s really a shame but a lot of experience on Tarmac, it’s really good for me. Really positive also with the team: no issue with the car. So it’s been a good rally and some points in the bag so I think we’re going to stay third in the championship.”

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

A solid run through for the second Ford to round off the weekend. “Of course it’s a bit frustrating when you’re not fighting with the others but we said we wanted a trouble-free event and that’s exactly what we’ve done this weekend. Finally a normal result I would say and this way we can launch our season”

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

“I was expecting a lot better to be honest. It has improved, today was not too bad, just missing that really good feeling to push and hopefully that will come. In here now I saw much diff opening in the morning (pass) with the car not braking so I was expecting the same but it was so much better now but I didn’t take advantage of it. Every braking I was afraid that the diff was opening and having no braking so just an okay stage but could have gone a lot faster..”

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

Fastest man of the morning up until the start of the Powerstage but Katsuta cannot maintain his run of stage wins. “Too many surprises on fast parts so I was really a bit too much careful on all of the stage basvally. This is not what I wanted like this on the finish like this but at least good to finish rally and some points for the team hopefully so I need to improve but thank you for the team.”

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

One of the candidates to overthrow Forumaux but Tänak has to settle for second by 3.8s. “For sure you can do more so I’ve been just really missing really the confidence. I’ve been fighting all I can but I don’t really get the feeling what I would like to go fast and obviously we have quite some moments (on the) first run so I just wanted to get the clean run this time. Now we are going to gravel so hopefully the situation is better there so in Kenya in the end was working well so it’s just the Tarmac which is a bit tricky at the moment.”

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

The Belgian pushes on as hard as he can with so many of the aerodynamic elements shorn from his car in order to safeguard third place overall. “It is what it is. I mean we had great few days but unfortunately today didn’t go so well. At the end we take important points, it should be 19 points from the weekend so it’s not too bad but we would have preferred to push a bit harder in the Powerstage but those cars without the rear wing, it’s undriveable.”

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

Risking nothing from his second place after the spin on this stage during his first pass through, Evans safely completes Croatia Rally in second place. “For sure it’s a feeling of disappointment today with the spin in here and the tyre choice not ideal but there we go. You’ve got to be in it let’s say to try and it didn’t work out this time so still it’s been a great weekend but disappointed with today.”

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

Toyota’s fourth win in four WRC Croatia Rally appearances is secured by the eight-time World champion, who expresses strong emotions at reaching his 100th WRC podium finish and his 59th WRC rally win. “Nice numbers, happy with that for sure. It’s a tough weekend, we knew coming here start position will be an issue, we never gave up with pressure as we could. So many moments, so many moments I never had in my life I guess in one rally but most importantly we bring it home with a win so thank you team that feels good. For sure it’s huge numbers, who would have thought that 15 years ago? So I enjoy every moment, I enjoy every opportunity I have to drive these cars and nice to see we still have some speed.”