**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 19 April 2024
Day: 2
FlashN°: 2
Special stage: SS1 Krašić – Sošice 1
Distance: 23.63 km km
Weather: Sunny but cool
Road conditions: Dry
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**Car #11. THIERRY NEUVILLE/MARTIJN WYDAEGHE (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

The 2024 WRC points leader uses the clean road surface to his advantage, setting a time of 12m 42.3s on the longest stage of the rally, with soft tyres fitted on all four corners of the car and two more softs in the boot. “I try but I have a hell of an understeer so I was struggling a lot and the grip was much lower than I expected so it felt like the tyre was overheating after 3km. It’s hard to say because back into the rhythm on these roads it feels like it’s slow because it’s so slippery but it’s maybe only the surface so I don’t know. It felt for me like not so great but if the time is good it can’t be so bad.”

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

A clean run on three hard tyres and one soft, with two hard spares in the boot, but the Welshman drops 6.6 seconds to Neuville. “It was mostly what we expected, that’s sure. Just struggling a little bit. (he tyre choice) was probably a little bit on the brave side but not bad.”

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

Running four soft tyres, the Frenchman opens his bid to reach his third successive podium in the 2024 WRC but drops 20 seconds to Neuville despite not encountering problems. “Well to be fair I’m struggling a little bit with the tyres so I have no feeling in the stage. But that’s a really interesting stage, really demanding and many different types (of corner) so that’s a good stage but I’m not so happy with my time for sure. I’m just overheating the tyres and then they start to move a lot and I have no feeling, no grip, so it’s quite weird.”

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

Carrying only one spare wheel in a bid to save weight and soft compound tyres on all, the Estonian still drops 17.9s to his team mate in the opening test. “It’s so much mud already and, yeah, the car is behaving really nervous as well so it’s very difficult to take much confidence at the moment.”

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

The Japanese driver starts cautiously on four soft tyres with two hard spares but loses 36.4s to Neuville. “It’s quite bad actually, the information is not quite so trustful. So I have to see the information – I mean I haven’t seen the road myself, so every corner losing time.”

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

Mirroring Evans’s tyre choice with three hard tyres and one soft, the eight-time champion ends 14.5s down on the points leader despite a front right puncture. “Not much we can do, much too dirty roads so we do what we can but of course it’s not possible too much, the time from the guys in front, so it’s not a bad time I think. I do what I can.”

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

Following the Hyundai convention of softer rubber, Mikkelsen has five softs and one hard for the morning loop, overshooting just past the halfway point of the stage and ending up 50s off the pace. “I made a big mistake in a junction, I went straight and had to reverse, then after that I was completely out of the rhythm. A lot of mud everywhere so it’s really hard to drive because you feel you’re going slow and you have a moment because of the mud so it’s… okay.”

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

Taking four soft tyres and two hard for the morning loop, the Belgian brings up the rear, dropping 58s after a cautious run. “My God, the road position is crazy in this one! For sure I didn’t have the good tyre option for this one but really amazing how much dirt there is on the road and I see already there are lines everywhere so just trying to keep it on the road and the time will be very bad I’m sure. The thing is with the cars in front the road is evolving too much and nothing is what (the gravel crew) said.”

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

Opening the way for the WRC2 runners, “I think it’s very not easy conditions for sure. It’s a strange feeling because I have cross (tyres) and the softs have high temperature at the beginning but it’s not bad.”

**Car #31. GUS GREENSMITH/JONAS ANDERSSON**

Not scoring points for WRC2 this weekend, but level with the pace of Rossel through the opening split times before dropping more than 6s in the final sector. “I thought I hgad a puncture at the end, we had a bad vibration off the rim so I backed off a little bit. I wasn’t sure if I was going to knowck it off the rim but now we’ll have a look. It’s tricky for sure!”