**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2021**

**Day: 2 Flash N°: 2**

**Special stage: SS1 Rude - Plešivica 1 Distance: 6.94 km**

**Weather: Bright blue skies, 14 degrees**

**Road conditions: Predominantly clean but gravel and mud being dragged onto the road in places**

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**Car #69. KALLE ROVANPERÄ/JONNE HALTTUNEN**

Crashed out after going wide on a long, right-hand bend. Both driver and co-driver vacated the car and appeared uninjured. Car sustained significant damage. Crash occurred within the final two kilometres of the stage.

**Car #11. THIERRY NEUVILLE/MARTIJN WYDAEGHE**

Quote not audible due to technical issue. Stage-end reporter confirmed said Neuville reported he “lost the feeling” after passing Rovanperä’s crash site. He also reported the grip was “low”.

**Car #1. SÉBASTIEN OGIER/JULIEN INGRASSIA**

Completed stage with left-rear tyre off the rim. No quote given.

**Car #33. ELFYN EVANS/SCOTT MARTIN**

“Pretty bad [grip]. The start wasn’t so bad but towards the end it was pretty bad.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA**

“[The grip was] like ice. The road is full of s\*\*\* to be honest. Six kilometres felt like a long stage.”

**Car #42. CRAIG BREEN/PAUL NAGLE**

“It was the first time I’d driven the car on anything close [to a proper stage]. My test was a full dry day with a big, dry wide road but we got through it and there’s still a lot more of the rally to go.”

**Car #18. TAKAMOTO KATSUTA/DANIEL BARRITT**

“It’s a short stage but very tricky and very slippery in some sections. I’ve never been on this kind of very slippery Tarmac and it’s going to be very tricky today.”

**Car #44. GUS GREENSMITH/CHRIS PATTERSON**

“It felt okay, it didn’t feel too bad. It felt slippery in places but I was struggling with the temperature in the hard tyres but it felt okay.”

**Car #16. ADRIEN FOURMAUX/RENAUD JAMOUL**

“We were just enjoying the stage, it was really tricky to be honest. I expected less dirt than we find in the stage. It was nice, it was a bad tyre choice because it was quite slippery but I was enjoying.”

**Car #7. PIERRE-LOUIS LOUBET/VINCENT LANDAIS**

“It’s good to be on Tarmac but there’s not so much Tarmac and it’s really difficult. We will try to manage but if it’s like during the first one it will be tough.”

**Car #20. ANDREAS MIKKELSEN/OLA FLØENE**

“There was so much gravel being pulled onto the road, I was very surprised. I didn’t get the tyres to work at all. We did our best but not a very good run. But it’s nice to get a feeling for these conditions because they are very different to what we had before. It’s a long rally.”

**Car #21. NIKOLAY GRYAZIN/KONSTANTIN ALEKSANDROV**

“Very slippery stage, in some places where it’s cut it’s so slippery and it’s difficult like this because of the gravel. But it’s a nice and we were fighting in some places. I lose in some places a lot [of time] because I went too wide, but the rest was okay.”

**Car #22. MARCO BULACIA/MARCELO OHANNESIAN**

“I took it carefully. It was supposed to be an easy stage, but it was very difficult. I am happy to be at the finish. But, anyway, the worse is coming.”

**Car #23. ENRICO BRAZZOLI/MAURIZIO BARONE**

No quote given.

**Car #24. MADS ØSTBERG/TORSTEIN ERIKSEN**

“It’s okay. For sure it’s quite tricky conditions out there but we did a decent stage.”

**Car #25. TEMMU SUNINEN/MIKO MARKKULA**

“We have no clue about the tyres, we’re learning the car. It’s tough out there.”

**Car #26. TOM KRISTENSSON/DAVID ARHUSIANDER**

“It’s definitely more tricky than I expected. To be honest I really enjoyed it anyway. To slide is my feeling and it’s also a good way to learn the car. But I think we’re doing good. All is fine and we’re doing it without any trouble or any mistakes. So far, so good.”

**COMMENTS**

Croatia’s first FIA World Rally Championship event got off to a dramatic start when points leaders Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen crashed out in the closing two kilometres of the opening stage. The Finns appeared uninjured although their Toyota Yaris WRC suffered extensive damage. Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe were fastest in their Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC with a 2.1s advantage over their team-mates Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja, the only leading crew to select four hard-compound Pirelli tyres. Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin were third fastest followed by Craig Breen/Paul Nagle. World champions Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia completed the stage with the fifth fastest time but with the left-rear tyre off the rim following reports of a significant ‘moment’ during the run.