**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2021**

**Day: 2 Flash N°: 5**

**Special stage: SS4 Pećurkovo Brdo – Mrežnički Novaki 1 Distance: 9.11 km**

**Weather: Bright blue skies, 16 degrees**

**Road conditions: Clean for early runners but gravel and mud being dragged onto the road in places**

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

Crashed out on SS1.

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

“We had a decent loop, obviously I am doing the best I can. The two last stages were really slippery as well. The conditions should be more or less equal for everybody but there were some really surprising grip changes.”

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

“It was very slippery and there were a couple of mistakes where I went a little wide because of the low grip. I’m not super-happy with the set-up but there’s still a long way.”

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

“Yeah, of course [there are things we can improve]. It’s tricky out there, the grip is changing a lot, especially towards the end of this stage. It’s bone-dry but it’s still very slippery in parts. It’s not easy.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA**

“The surface is so strange here, even now it’s dry here but it’s no way to get the [hard compound] tyre working.”

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

No comment available.

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

Slid wide at right-hand junction and nudged a bank with the rear of his Toyota Yaris WRC. Completed the stage with the left-rear tyre off the rim. “It wasn’t wrong anything, I didn’t understand the pacenote maybe, it just came very quick that junction and obviously I brake too late and didn’t stop, I don’t know. But luckily this is the last one for the loop.”

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

“It wasn’t too bad, that stage was the probably the slippiest of the morning so far. There were a few times when I ran wide and lost quite a few seconds so I was five seconds slower than I should have been. We might make a few set-up changes in service but not so much.”

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

“I’m so happy to be honest. The car is amazing and I’m enjoying so much in the stage. I did some mistake in the stage but I don’t really care because I just want to drive and learn the car and see where is the limit. I think I did one jump sideways that was quite fun but I don’t want to do that next time and I will be more careful for that.”

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

“I was too careful in the dirty parts, I think but this was the first time for me in this category. It was really enjoyable and let’s continue. I am sure it will be much better this afternoon.”

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

Stopped on SS2 with a broken right-rear suspension arm.

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

After nearly going off the road into a ditch close to the flying finish, Gryazin said in response to a question on WRC Plus All Live: “You saw that? I was trying to not tell about it but all the time it was too much slidings. But it was not only one moment. Just near the beginning I nearly went off also. So I had two scary moments and it’s big luck we are here. It’s so slippery the stage. It’s dry and it doesn’t matter which tyres you have, it just slides every time. Okay, we go to service and it should be nice.”

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

“It’s a difficult rally but we are happy. Our pace is good but still it’s difficult not to have moments. But we have a safe margin and we have to continue like this.”

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

“The stage is better, it’s good. I have better feeling with the car and I changed the tyres because before I had them crossed but now it’s okay.”

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

“To experience the road, learn about the grip and also to check the pacenotes has been good. I’m glad I’m through the first part of the day but for sure the second half of the stage will be a big fight so we will try to enjoy it like we have done this morning.

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

Understeered off the road on a tight left-hand corner nearing the stage finish and dropped into a ditch. Managed to regain the road after a delay of approximately 30s. “It was a slippery place, I lost the line and went a bit wide and lost a minute or something.”

**COMMENTS**

Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe returned to the top of the Croatia Rally stage times with the fastest run through SS4, the final run of Friday morning’s opening loop. The Hyundai-driving Belgians out-paced Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin (Toyota Yaris WRC) to extend their overall lead to 7.3s heading to the midday service halt at Zagreb Fair. Takamoto Katsuta/Daniel Barritt lost time with a low-speed slide into a bank and completed the stage with the left-rear tyre off the rim.