**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2021**

**Day: 2 Flash N°: 9**

**Special stage: SS8 Pećurkovo Brdo – Mrežnički Novaki 2 Distance: 9.11 km**

**Weather: Bright blue skies, 18 degrees**

**Road conditions: Gravel and dry mud visible in some sections**

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

Crashed out on SS1.

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

Ran wide into a bank on a left-hand corner. “We had a small moment, obviously I was trying to push a bit more but on the braking I just lost the grip and went a bit off but nothing major, it was all under control.”

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

Ogier registered his 600th WRC stage win on SS7. “It’s always nice to have some statistic but what is important is we are in the fight, we enjoy and the car is nice and it’s more fun this afternoon to drive. It’s a long race and we have a nice battle ahead with Thierry and with my team-mate Elfyn. I think he had a big moment there, he went in the bank, I see the lines. I think that was a close one but I also had a close one this morning.”

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

“It does [mean an epic battle tomorrow]. It’s been quite close all day. Not the perfect afternoon loop for us to be honest but it’s not been bad either. Definitely there’s something to work on tomorrow so let’s see.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA**

“For sure we are improving so that’s the main [thing]. Of course, I don’t feel really comfortable in here and it’s difficult to really push and extract the limit, but I tried to do everything I can in the zone I have and hopefully I can improve for tomorrow.”

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

“I got to drive a World Rally Car for a day, that’s one positive. Honestly, I have some things that I need to change in the car for tomorrow, some things that I had absolutely no reference for my pace, the road was completely different all day and I need to change some things in the car just to give me some help but we got through anyway.”

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

“It’s up and down like my performance. Some stages are good, some stages too bad and I made a mistake myself. It was not easy to keep a good confidence in myself but it’s all about the learning. Okay, we lost a lot of time but still the rally is going on and still there is a long way to go. I try to get more confidence and it will be okay.”

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

“It was no problem it’s kind of a slow corner but the line was on marbles and I dropped a wheel but I kept it in. There we are. It was not the cleanest stage but we’re here. Some [of today has] been pretty good, some of it could have been better.”

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

“I’m really, really happy to be honest. It’s amazing, the car is so nice to drive, it’s just crazy and the stages were really nice this afternoon. It’s just insane in some places, just places, just crazy. But I can be really happy because I try to improve my pace when I have the confidence and go back when I don’t have. Sometimes it’s so easy to do a mistake and if you are a bit out of the line you lose time. It’s a hard job!”

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

“I was thinking it would be better in this one so we try to understand.”

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

“It’s been very difficult stages, really difficult because we need so much information in the pacenotes there is so much things happening all the time so we have to make things easier tomorrow and adapt it a little bit and it will be better. It was frustrating with the start of today when we lost all the all the rally. We are just trying to learn the stages for the years to come and do the best out of the situation.”

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

“Sometimes [I am pushing] but not all the time. When I feel I can push I am pushing sometimes. It’s interesting. I don’t care about the result, I am just trying to enjoy and and somehow try to survive on the road, it’s what I like to do. This stage I was not pushing because it was the end of the day and everybody wants to be on the next day. I will work for tomorrow.”

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

“I went off after the finish, but I think there is no damage on the car. I am very happy about my pace and this was my only mistake of the day. After that everything is positive. We have to change the pop-off [valve] and cross fingers the next pop-off will open.”

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

No quote available.

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

“It’s been a very good day, very tricky conditions out there and we try to manage our day as well as possible. The conditions are tricky so we are maybe giving away a few seconds here and there and push where we can push. I feel comfortable with the speed that we have and I think other people are pushing a bit harder than us. We will continue.”

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

“In all the stages we could have been a bit faster. There is still work to do.”

**COMMENTS**

A third consecutive stage win for Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia has propelled the world champions into second place on the Croatia Rally ahead of Toyota team-mates Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin. Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe continue to lead for Hyundai, by 7.7s, despite making hefty contact with a bank during the Friday’s final stage. World Rally Car rookie Adrien Fourmaux impressed with the fifth fastest time in his M-Sport Ford Fiesta.