**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 22 April 2023**

**Day: 3 Flash N°: 12**

**Special stage: Ravna Gora - Skrad 1 Distance: 10.13 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 15°**

**Road conditions: Mainly dry but some patches of mud and gravel**

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**Car #69. KALLE ROVANPERÄ/JONNE HALTTUNEN (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

Rovanperä is first through Croatia Rally’s all-new stage in a time of 5m47.9s. “Quite difficult, new stages are always tricky with the new notes and when it’s conditions like this. This one has a lot of mud and cuts all the time and it’s really dirty so not an easy stage, especially with hards on the car it was quite slippy in places but all okay.”

**Car #7. PIERRE-LOUIS LOUBET/NICOLAS GILSOUL (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

Loubet completes in 6m05.1s. “Maybe a bit the road but also I was too careful thinking it would be much worse and I didn’t take too much risk and I was too slow.”

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

Katsuta closes up to Loubet with a 6m01.8s. The gap is now 3.3s. “It was a mess in some sections with a lot of mud and dirt coming from the inside. For sure it’s getting worse and worse and tricky I would say. Still we are here but it’s going to be quite messy behind us.”

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

Ogier’s time is a 5m50.4s. “It was pretty clear that this stage is going to be a massive advantage up front. Near the end is getting very greasy and muddy. We didn’t really push either.”

**Car #4. ESAPEKKA LAPPI/JANNE FERM (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

Lappi’s time is a 6m02.9s. He says: “I have zero confidence. It’s been a tough morning. I don’t know what’s wrong. Confidence is not there, maybe I slept bad.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

Tänak completes in 5m59.5s to extend his margin over Lappi in the chase for third place. “It’s a bit more dirty, it’s still quite challenging, a bit unpredictable, but okay, one stage to go.”

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

Evans makes it to the end of the run in 5m55.5s. With Neuville crashing out after 5.2 kilometres (see below), Evans leads Tänak by 19.1s. No comment available from the stage finish.

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

Neuville crashes out of the lead on a long, right-hand corner, striking a large boulder with the left rear of his i20 N Rally1. Both Neuville and Wydaeghe are uninjured but their car is too badly damaged to continue.

**Car #21. YOHAN ROSSEL/ARNAUD DUNAND (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

“I think it’s just a crazy stage.”

**Car #24. NIKOLAY GRYAZIN/KONSTANTIN ALEKSANDROV (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“The stage is nice, it’s really enjoyable but it’s just dirty and tricky. It’s also new for everyone and there is a lot of pollution. It’s difficult to find a good rhythm because some places are really slippery.”

**Car #30. NICOLAS CIAMIN/YANNICK ROCHE (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

“The stage felt quite okay but not fantastic. It’s a new stage for everybody so it’s the first time since the beginning of the rally that I’m at the same level as the others on the knowledge of the stages. Obviously I was expecting on this one to see the time but it was a tricky stage.”

**Car #20. OLIVER SOLBERG/ELLIOTT EDMONDSON (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

Solberg spins at high seed after 2.8 kilometres. There’s damage to the rear of the car with the rear window missing and the spoiler broken but he continues at full pace. “It was a dry entry but a full-wet exit and it wasn’t like that on the recce so it caught us out.”

**Car #36. ALEJANDRO CACHÓN/ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

Stopped 4.2 kilometres from the start of SS9. The Spaniard, who is making his Croatia Rally debut this year, had been in fourth position in WRC2.

**Car #26. SAMI PAJARI/ENNI MÄLKÖNEN (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“Really a tricky one, somehow really, really tricky and not easy to work out where is the mud and where is the safest route.”

**Car #22. EMIL LINDHOLM/REETA HÄMÄLÄINEN (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“That was interesting. A lot of gravel and mud on the road, especially the last part was tricky. I tried to go but it’s not easy when you don’t know how the grip is.”

**Car #23. GUS GREENSMITH/JONAS ANDERSSON (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“I’m enjoying [the battle] but Adrien has for sure stepped it up today, he’s doing a great job. That was a good run for me so no complaints.”

**Car #25. ADRIEN FOURMAUX/ALEXANDRE CORIA (FORD FIESTA RALLY2)**

Fourmaux completes the stage but no comment available.

**COMMENTS**

There’s high drama as Neuville crashes out of the lead on Croatia Rally’s all-new stage, handing first place to Evans with Tänak and Lappi moving up to second and third respectively. Rovanperä scores his third consecutive stage win of the day. In the battle for what is now fourth place, Katsuta is just 3.3s behind Loubet. Solberg damages the rear of his Škoda with a high-speed spin but continues.

**ENDS**

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